



MAZES

MAZES *Fantasy Roleplaying REFORGED*. A modern take on the classic fantasy dungeon RPG. With a single polyhedral die and the power of your imagination can you defeat the Maze Controller with swords, sorcery, and shadow? Lightning fast and easy to master, Mazes returns us to the dungeons where we first battled dragons with an award-winning, unique approach to fantasy roleplaying. Open the door to Adventure - if you're brave enough...



9th Level Games
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MAZES

Fantasy Roleplaying

*“This one, this one right here...
this was my dream, my wish.”*

- Mouth, *The Goonies*

a game by
Chris O’Neill

powered by *polymorph*

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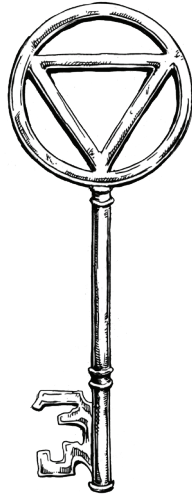
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*the rules to a world of swords & sorcery playable with
polyhedral dice and the power of your imagination.*

MAZES

powered by **polymorph**



≈ AN INVOCATION ≈

Once upon a time, I took a roller coaster and found myself trapped in a magical and mysterious maze that was called “a dungeon.” I am as hopelessly lost in its labyrinth now, as I was the first time that I faced the evil magic-user Bargle or fought the water weird as I explored the Dungeon of Dread.

MAZES is a thoroughly new take on the venerable dungeon crawler. It is hewn from the very bones of the past. We take direction from the guides of Basic. We stole the grit and grime from the Unearthed Arcana. We explore Tunnels filled with Trolls, and the twisting passageways are the same caverns mapped out by Palladium and by the Arcanum. The strange beasts hail from Ardruin. The glory imported from Glorantha. The tomes are borrowed from the libraries of Midkemia.

From this dungeon deep, I have come to lay my offering upon the altar of the Fantasy Heartbreaker— one last time. In many ways, Mazes is just a reformulation of an already discovered thing – an attempt to try and capture the magic spark of that original fantasy roleplaying experience. In other ways, important ways, it is something new and exciting.

I have spent much of the last decade playing with dice and ideas around a new, streamlined, elegant answer to many of the problems in roleplaying – an answer that we call **polymorph**. After the initial publication in Zine Quest, and a host of other **polymorph** games, what you hold in your hands is the definitive **MAZES** game.

Simple roleplaying rules for daring adventurers going down into dangerous dungeons to fight dragons with funny little dice. So, my stalwart companions—light your torches, and take up your die— we venture into the Maze!

- Chris O'Neill

Norristown, PA
2022

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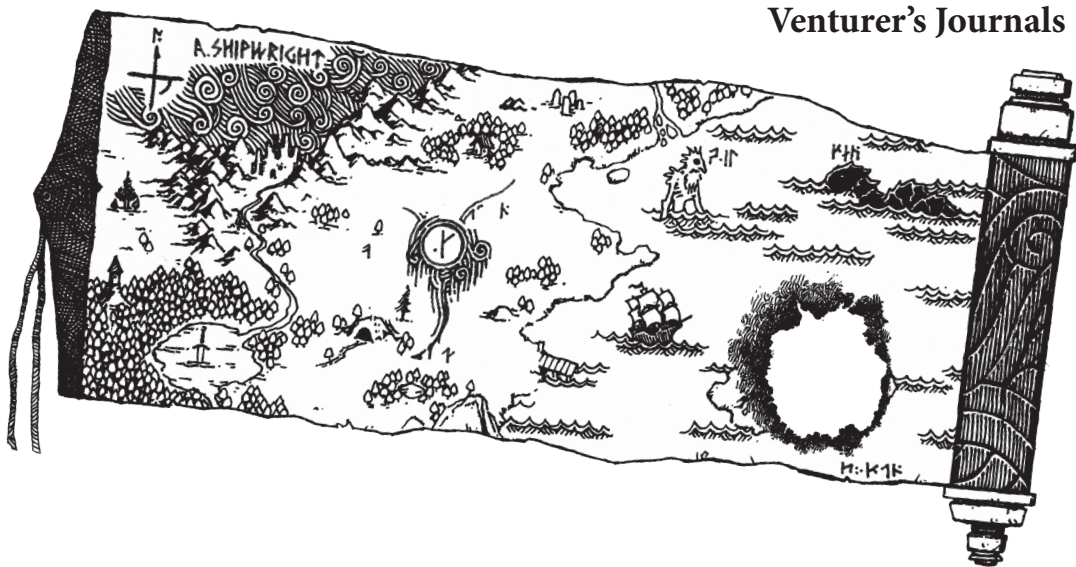
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being rules for roleplay using polyhedral
dice and the power of your imagination



~ Part One ~

INTO THE MAZE



ON ROLEPLAYING



“...it’s hard for little folk to escape his cunning mazes.”

- JRR Tolkien, *The Fellowship of the Ring*

IS THIS DUNGEONS AND DRAGONS?

There are dungeons. There might be dragons. There are definitely funny little dice. No, this isn’t that specific game, but it is fantasy roleplaying.

This is **MAZES** Fantasy Roleplaying – rules for adventurers entering the darkness in dangerous places seeking treasure and glory.

WHAT IS ROLEPLAYING?

Even if this is old hat, read on as **MAZES** is a bit different from some of the other roleplaying games that you have played before. If you don’t know what any of this means, there is enough here to teach you how to play a game – though having a guide show you how to play is easier. We guarantee that this is a great game to start your roleplaying journey with – its rules are both elegant and simple.

Roleplaying games are different than other types of games. What they are (or aren’t) is something that is still hotly debated around nerd tables after nearly half a century. It’s hard to tell where they start and end, if you are any good at them, or if it’s even possible to be good at them. Opinions are murky on whether they should be balanced and fair; easy or hard. There aren’t really winners and losers. Oh, and almost no one agrees on what is or isn’t a roleplaying game, or if roleplaying games are even games...

Roleplaying is playing a **CHARACTER** under a set of rules that govern a world. The Game is a set of rules that guide you through creating that character, exploring a space or a theme with them, and hopefully telling stories with them.

RPGs combine writing and acting in a form that isn’t like anything else. They aren’t simply structured storytelling, they’re also games – this idea will make more sense once you start playing.

TELLING a STORY TOGETHER, PLAYING a GAME to FIND OUT WHAT HAPPENS

At the core of every roleplaying game is the idea that we are playing to find out what happens. In a different way than a board game, a video game, or even other storytelling games, in a roleplaying game we have to play to find out. We don't just get to see what happens, we don't just know what will happen, or get to say what will happen. We have to **PLAY** to see what happens.

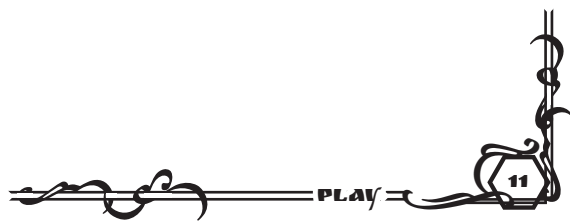
When you are faced with a decision, or an event – it's not always going to play out the way that you want – or even the way that you expect. At their core, these games are about the thrill of success and failure in the midst of a growing, emergent narrative.

Mazes is about exploring a fantasy world – a world rising up after a devastating catastrophe a world that has moved on, and finding out where you fit into that world. As you play, you are going to share the creation of a story together – not through exposition but through the actions of your characters.

One player, called the **MAZE CONTROLLER(MC)**, leads the story. The **MC** guides the story, determining how everything in the world works and playing all of the characters not played by the other players; known as non-player characters or **NPCS**. They take on the role of the world, the monsters, and the mysteries that you will face.

You and the other players are the characters. Throughout your plays of Mazes, we expect you to play many characters. You may even take on the role of the **MC**. If you've never played a roleplaying game before, it's usually best if someone with some experience acts as the **MC** for your first game.

If this is your first **RPG**, welcome – we wish you all the best on your new journey. If this is your millionth **RPG**, welcome back – we hope that you find something new and exciting in these pages and these worlds.



WHAT DO I NEED to PLAY?

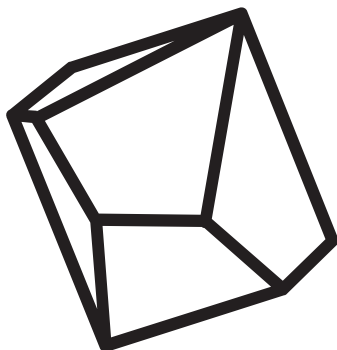
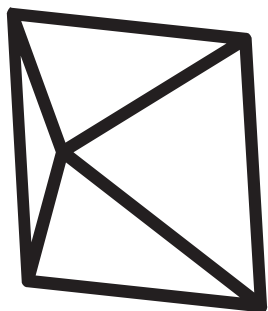
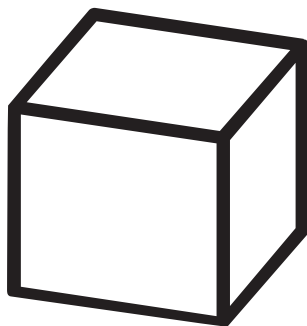
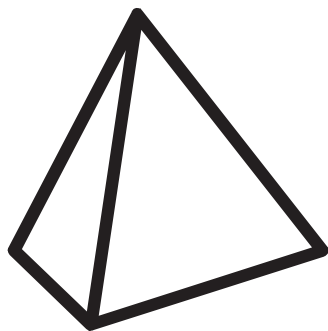
You have in your hands all the rules that you will need to play.

In addition to this book, each player will need some dice. Specifically, polyhedral dice, at least one d4, d6, d8, and d10. It's best to have a few of each die type. In this game only the players roll dice, but an **MC** may want a pair of d12s for tracking Darkness and Treasure.

You will need Character Sheets – you can download sheets and other accessories from **9THLEVEL.COM/RESOURCES** – and some writing implements.

While not necessary for game play, some players like to have paper or a journal on hand for taking notes and scribbling ideas and maps. We also like to use name cards (such as folded index cards) since we are often playing one-shot games at conventions and similar events.

Lastly, we suggest using tokens, though again these are not strictly necessary. The four most common tokens are: Hearts, Stars, Treasure, and Darkness. All of these can be tracked with paper and pencil, but there is something visceral and fun about seeing brass coins or crystal gems to represent treasure or watching literal hearts disappear.



WHAT SHOULD IT LOOK LIKE?

First, each of the players will create a character. Usually, you are making a character for the present game, but you may create a group of characters, and then decide which is being played later. It is best to have the players make characters together.

During a game, the characters are going to go on an adventure. Mazes has very specific rules about how Adventures work that are explained in more depth in Part 4 and Part 5.

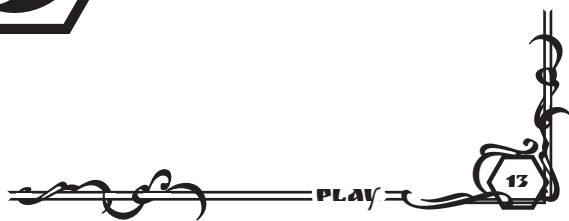
THE MAZE CONTROLLER (MC) will describe a scene to the players. Each player then has a chance to describe what their character does. Depending on their actions, the **MC** may ask the player to roll a die, pay a cost, or spend a resource.

Over the course of an adventure the players will take their characters through an expanding world – they may become rich and powerful or they may die along the way. No matter what happens, the goal is to have a good time and tell engaging stories.

Roleplaying is more than just cooperative, it's communal. You aren't simply playing together to win; your characters' lives are bound together.

The expectations of Mazes games are very different than those of most other fantasy roleplaying games. Mazes is perfect for telling “short, one-shot” stories and for telling longer term multiple part stories, but there is no expectation that the game will be played over a long campaign. Whether you are playing a one-shot or an adventure within a campaign, you should assume that an adventure will take 2-3 hours.

There are also “modules,” or pre-created adventures, to help you understand what a Mazes game looks like. Another option is to watch some Actual Plays on the internet– search for **MAZES** Actual Play on YouTube or the like.



WELCOME TO THE MAZE

“The interior of the Tower was a series of death traps... It ended long before I could thread the maze to my comrades.”

- Glen Cook, *The Black Company*

THIS IS A BROKEN AGE.

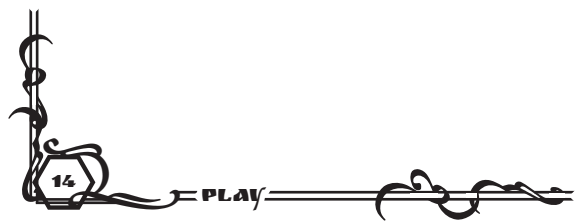
There was a war – though none alive today remember it. Even an Ilf with a century of years was born after the fall. There was an apocalypse. Mayhaps, it was an endless series of wars and not a single Armageddon. A sorcerous war between Witch Kingdoms. A battle between brothers or races. A war of mad gods. We may never know. What is known is that there are ruins aplenty from that time. Trinkets and treasures that tell of an age before. An age of power. An age of riches.

These wars sundered kingdoms and shattered the ancient empire that once held sway from sea to sea. From its bones and ashes arose petty kingdoms and city states – that rose and fell as the strong women and men that built them passed. Dukes and countesses, barons and ladies claim land and hold sway in the Wilds, or brave their way into the Badlands to take back terrain and forge new estates. Most villages are little more than armed camps built on the ruins of some other place lost to time.

THIS IS AN AGE OF MORTALS.

The elves of yore retreated into their Fae Realms, leaving only mixed bloodlines to remember them in burning eyes and colorful hair. The ancient dwarves diminished and died away, leaving only their sprawling tunnels as testament to their existence. The highborn and the mighty alike were cast down and the world moved on receding like a wave back into the sea.

Humans and other lineages survived the chaos, and some even thrived. This was a time for the brutal and the cunning to rise. In the sorcerous torturing of reality, new people were born from that dying age without masters to bend knees to. The goblins left their caves to spread across the lands, the smallfolken took to the hills, and what was left of the Ilves set off wandering.



THIS IS AN AGE OF DARKNESS.

Serfs and slaves toil by day and fear the night. They say even the sun and the moons are dimmer than once they were. Monsters and beasts arise from the dark places. The fall of the times before hasn't stopped, forces of darkness and entropy are still destroying the world.

Strange men and fell beasts stalk and hunt across the land. Some looking for the power of the past, and others born from it. Dark souls seep from crypts and hunger to diminish the light.

THIS IS AN AGE OF IGNORANCE AND FEAR.

Knowledge is scarce, learning even more so. Few can read. Most are concerned only with putting bread in their mouths and finding a place to stay warm for one more night.

Only a few understand magic or science, or even care to. Those that seek wisdom are just as likely to be called witches and cultists, as scholars. Fear is paramount. Strong swords are needed to keep order, and sharp minds to find justice.

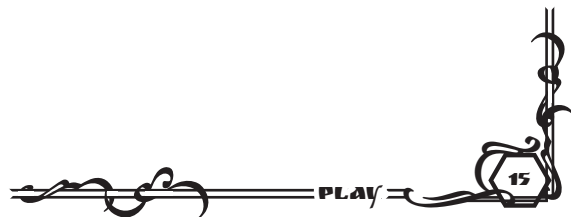
THIS IS THE AGE OF THE MAZE.

As the pall of darkness spreads, evil sprouts in the badlands. The ancient ruins spit forth abominations. Dungeon gates locked by dwarf and elf break, releasing old gods. Unimaginable horrors created by witch-kings of yore crawl out from their ancient pits, freed from the enchantments that bound them as those sorceries withered and fell.

In this broken age, the gleaming halls of splendor and bounty have fallen into forgotten passages of dust and worn stone. These labyrinths, these mazes, are scrawled just beneath the surface of the world. Their dark paths are lost to memory and filled with peril.

The brave and the wise venture forth to find answers and power in this benighted time. Within the ruins of the past there are answers for those that seek them, and riches for those cunning enough to return.

Welcome to this world of mazes and monsters!



WHAT IS A MAZE?

“...Life may be like a maze, but this is not life. This is a game and a game is a dungeon.”

- Kieron Gillen, *Die*

A **MAZE** refers to any story where the characters are facing down a challenge or series of connected challenges. In many situations, this will be a literal underground dungeon of twisting corridors and passageways – a maze. But it can refer to any story the players undertake, as well as the location where that story happens – a dark forest, an ancient ruin, the backstreets of a city.

Presented within this game is a brief sketch of a “world” that your games may take place in. In that world, the word **MAZE** has an additional meaning. Scattered across the world are the ruins of a previous civilization; a dark empire of evil witch-kings and their monstrous servants. As they are uncovered, these deadly mazes attract powerful fighters and puissant sorcerers to investigate them to claim their knowledge and riches.

THE DOOR TO ADVENTURE

Every game of **MAZES** starts at the door into a dungeon. The party has just lit their torches and are descending into the maze. What horrors and treasures await them...?

A fundamental principle of Mazes is that we start every “adventure” as close to the action as possible. In a fantasy adventure game, this means starting at the **DOOR TO ADVENTURE**. The players are always about to step into the darkness of a cave mouth, walk down the stairs into a dungeon, or leap off the ship onto a strange island.

Your characters don't spend any time traveling to their destination. They don't start with a shopping trip to collect supplies or researching ruins in the wizard's library. Games should never start in town (unless it's in the street where the action starts with you getting punched in the mouth).

The cool parts of those experiences are handled differently in this game – as you will see when we explain **DARKNESS** and **TREASURE**. For now, remember that we start each game opening the door to adventure.

SWORDS AGAINST THE DARKNESS

The rules for **MAZES** could be used to tell any kind of story, but specifically everything herein is designed for the telling of a very specific kind of story – one that we call “Swords Against the Darkness.” The classes, edges, monsters, treasures, and lore presented throughout these books are all going to describe that kind of game. A game where fighters, wizards, and thieves loot dungeons and fight monsters. It’s about exploring forgotten caverns and ruins while avoiding perilous traps. It’s not about shining knights and political intrigue, wandering bards and chivalrous romance. The world used to be more civilized, more powerful but that golden age of Empire and Magic has fallen – none still living remember it. Society has broken apart and the world is a patchwork of petty kingdoms, trading ports, and blasted ruins. It is a dark world.

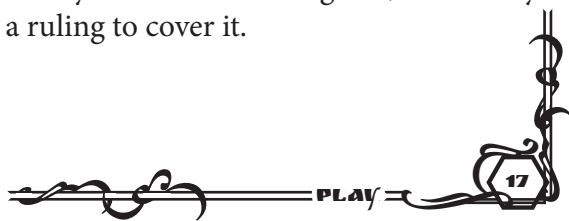
But there is light to be found in the torches of your characters and shining off the edges of their blades. Your characters are a **SWORD AGAINST THE DARKNESS** – fighting against hopelessness and the reign of evil. It’s about fighting for glory, for greed, and for self.

In Mazes your characters are adventurers living in a dark and troubled world. They are wanderers and vagabonds – that make their living raiding dungeons and ruins. Each maze is intended to be a simple “dungeon crawl” adventure that can be resolved in a few hours. Players can use flashbacks to “go to town for supplies,” “research the evil monster,” or “accept a warrant for the arrest of the Bandit Lord”, and the like. Each story can be self-contained, or an emergent narrative could occur stringing your varied tales together.

Advancement isn’t the core function of Mazes – there is no grinding out levels. These rules allow for an emergent story to develop, much like reading the fantasy novellas of the 60s and 70s – as opposed to the Big Fat Fantasy Novels of the 1980s and beyond, which were themselves so effected by roleplaying game narratives.

RULINGS OVER RULES

We hope that you find the rules in this tome easy to grok and use. They are groundwork – not a comprehensive set of explanations for everything that might come to pass. This is by design. Part of the thrill of old-school roleplaying was always the idea that you could try anything. Our hope is that these rules will give you all the tools that you need to “adjudicate” your actions in the game, and if they don’t that it will be easy for you to make a ruling to cover it.



ROLLING THE DICE

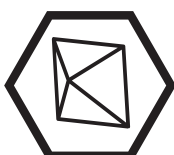
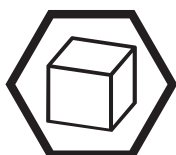
“He slunk along alleys and shadowed plazas until he came to the district which was his destination – The Maze.”

- Robert Howard, *Rogues in the House*

MY ROLE IS MY ROLL

Each character is controlled through the use of a single die. They each have a **ROLE**, which defines which die they **ROLL**. The choice of which die and the selection of some Edges are the primary focus of making a character.

There are 4 basic roles, each role has distinct strengths and weaknesses, based purely on the math of rolling that specific die.



THE FOUR ROLES

The Paragon is represented by the d4 

The Vanguard is represented by the d6 

The Fighter is represented by the d8 

The Sentinel is represented by the d10 

YOUR DIE

Within a Mazes game, **ONLY** the players roll dice, the Maze Controller never rolls dice. The Maze Controller is both an impartial storyteller and the enemy of the party, but all actions in the game are player facing. The **MC** doesn't attack the players– the players defend against the attacks of the monsters and traps in the maze.

Depending on their **ROLE**, each player will have a specific **DIE** to **ROLL**.

YOU ONLY EVER ROLL your DIE

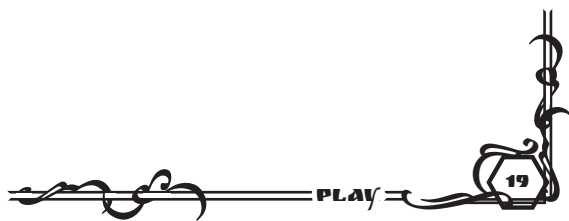
This die will be a d4, a d6, a d8, or a d10. Each Die has advantages and disadvantages built into it.

No matter what happens – you will **ALWAYS, ONLY, EVER** roll **YOUR DIE**. If you are a d4, you always roll the d4, if you are the d8, you roll the d8. Need to make an Action Roll? Roll your die. Effect Roll? Roll your die.

There are three core types of rolls that you may make – the **ACTION ROLL**, the **SAVE ROLL**, and the **EFFECT ROLL**. We'll come back to the Effect Roll in a minute, as it's a little different than the others.

Most actions are resolved by rolling a die to determine if you succeed or fail at that action. The success or failure of Action and Save rolls is determined by rolling the static numbers of 4 types of actions (Books, Boots, Blades, and Bones) or two special results (the Key and Crown). You succeed on an action if you roll one of the numbers shown for that action type.

When your character is good at something, or the situation is favorable, they may gain a second die roll which allows them to roll twice and succeed if only one of those roles is a success – this is called **ADVANTAGE**. If the odds are against them or they are lacking in an area, they also gain a second die roll, but they must roll two successes to succeed . this is called **DISADVANTAGE**.



THE ACTION

Taking an **ACTION** is the primary activity on a player's turn (see **MOMENTS**, page 38).

An **ACTION** (or Action Roll) is a roll that a player makes to do something that they want to do. Rolls are active, making an action roll requires that it be your turn and taking an Action is the result of your turn. The player describes the action that their character is trying to take; the **MC** tells them what kind of **ACTION** they need to roll against – Books, Boots, Blades, or Bones.

Let's say that you are trying to run from a crab-bear down a corridor. The **MC** says, "Roll Boots." Regardless of your die type – you roll it and hope that you roll a 3, 4, or 5 – the target numbers for **BOOTS** (conveniently located on your character sheet).

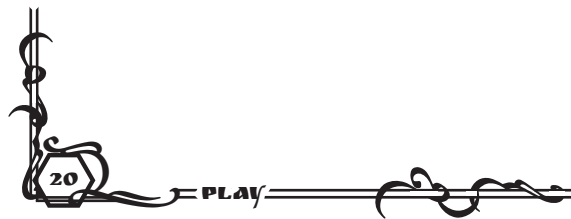
THE SAVE

Making a **SAVE** is the primary character activity when it is the **MC**'s turn.

A **SAVE** (or Saving Roll) is a roll made to avoid something that the **MC** is doing against them. A **SAVE** is almost always taken off turn – unless it is a response to an Action the player has just taken. For example, one of your characters wants to open a door, the **MC** asks them to make a **BOOTS SAVE** because the floor falls out from under them as soon as they open the door.

Saving Rolls are your responses to things happening **TO YOU**. The most common kind of save is a **BLADE SAVE**, which will usually be what you roll when you are being attacked. Remember, in Mazes, the **MC** never rolls dice – so if a creature attacks you, we resolve that by having the player **ROLL TO SAVE** (not take damage), as opposed to the **MC** rolling to act (trying to inflict damage).

Unlike Actions, Saves can happen any time – and do not use "your turn."





THE **EFFECT**

An **EFFECT** determines the impact of something that the player has done – such as Damage. After some actions are successful (and rarer actions that fail), the **MC** will ask you to roll for the effect. The most common version of this Effect Roll is a “damage roll” during combat.

Effect rolls are part of an action or save and can be affected by **EDGES**, just like any other roll. Sometimes, an effect is simple – you’ve hit something with your sword, roll effect to determine the amount of damage done. Sometimes, it’s more of a “pointer” for something like distance or scale. You throw the smallfolk adventurer up onto the ledge, roll effect to see how far they go.

Unlike Actions and Saves, Effect rolls are not about trying to hit specific numbers but about trying to get high numbers and making dice explode. When you are rolling for effect if you roll your **CROWN** (the highest number on your die) it results in the die “exploding.” When a die “explodes” roll it again and add the results together. This larger number is the damage you do in combat. So, while larger dice have a higher effect on average, smaller dice explode more often.

VANTAGE

The primary way that you can affect dice rolls in Mazes is through **VANTAGE** – positive effects are **ADVANTAGED**, and negative effects are **DISADVANTAGED**. When you have **VANTAGE** – either good or bad – roll your die twice (or roll two of your die if you have them).

If you have Advantage, you succeed if **EITHER** roll succeeds.
If you have Disadvantage, you only succeed if **BOTH** rolls succeed.

While vantaged, it's possible to have increased results. When rolling with Advantage, if you succeed on both rolls, this is a **CRITICAL**, and should result in a better outcome (at least giving you advantage on your Effect Roll). While rolling with **DISADVANTAGE**, if you fail on both rolls, this is a **FUMBLE**, and results in a worse than anticipated outcome.

If you have Advantage, and succeed on **BOTH** rolls, it's a **CRITICAL**.
If you have Disadvantage, and fail on **BOTH** rolls, it's a **FUMBLE**.

You could also gain **ADVANTAGE** and **DISADVANTAGE** on effect rolls. Since you are not rolling against a target number, vantage is handled differently. When you have Advantage on an effect, roll an additional die and take the higher result. For a Disadvantaged Effect, roll twice and keep the lower result.

If you have Advantage on an Effect Roll, take the **HIGHEST** result.
If you have Disadvantage, on an Effect Roll, take the **LOWEST** result.

When you have multiple sources that could provide Vantage, you still can only take one of them, they do not stack. You have **ADVANTAGE** if any Edge or situation would give it to you (even if more than one thing is giving you Advantage). You have **DISADVANTAGE** in the same manner. So, you always only roll one die (standard) or two dice (vantaged).

If you are in a situation where you have both Advantage and Disadvantage – they cancel each other out. Roll only one die.



JUST DO IT

Players have a lot of power and control over what is going on in the game. They describe their actions to the Maze Controller and the **MC** will either narrate what happens because of your characters' choices and actions or ask you to roll dice to see if it works.

A central premise of Mazes is that the characters are the heroes (or at least the protagonists of the story that they are in). As the protagonists, we assume that they have the requisite skills and abilities to succeed most of the time. When a character tries to do something that they *should* be able to do, it just happens. Don't waste time rolling dice. Warriors can take care of their weapons; Wizards can read ancient tomes; Robbers can steal; and Hunters can smell game on the wind. It's something that your character can do – it's intrinsic to their class so it's not interesting if they fail at it.

Asking questions like “can I do such and such” is often used as the basis for a dialogue with the **MC** about an environment or an acknowledgement that the character can do that thing. They are a way for a character to gain knowledge about their environment without rolling. This doesn't mean that nothing requires a roll, if there is a chance that they won't succeed there should always be a roll.

Now, just because they *can* (or even *should*) be able to do something, doesn't mean they always will. Sometimes there will be conflict, or a chance that a character won't succeed. Just because they are hunters doesn't mean that they always return with game or can follow the trail. Just because they're wizards doesn't mean that they absolutely can decipher that ancient text. And so on.

When there is a chance that they could fail, or whenever they are being actively contested – **ROLL THE DICE.**

❧ **EXAMPLE:** *As the Monster Slayer enters a room, the **MC** tells them that they see the spore of Blood Trolls. There is no roll, they are a hunter of monsters – they know common monster tracks and how to spot them. Now, if the player wants to track the trolls, the **MC** may call for a **BOOKS** roll (if the tracks are hard to read), or a **BOOTS** roll (to keep up with the troll).*



SEVEN RESOLUTIONS

BOOKS, BOOTS, BLADES, AND BONES

At the most basic level, when you take an **ACTION** or make a **SAVE** you roll your die, attempting to roll one of the target numbers listed on your character sheet for one of the **FOUR CORE RESOLUTIONS** – Books, Boots, Blades, or Bones.

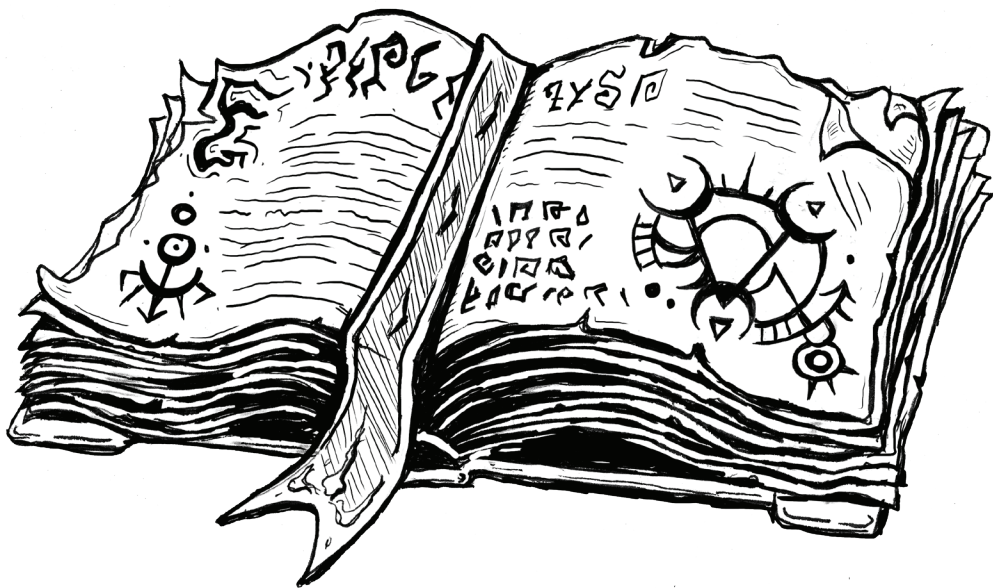
Because of the distribution of these numbers, each of the Roles is more or less likely to roll them– resulting in each role behaving differently in the game. We will go into this more in the next section. (Roles and Rolls starts on page 31.)

BOOKS

Roll **BOOKS** when you are testing knowledge, perception, and mental powers. Books also covers anything sensory – listening, seeing, remembering.

When you are trying to roll **BOOKS**, you want to roll a 2 or a 3.

The **PARAGON** (d4) is the best at rolling **BOOKS**. Play a d4 if you want to be knowledgeable, smart, or perceptive.



BOOTS

Roll **BOOTS** when you are testing any physical movements or athletic activity – running, jumping, sliding, dodging, skulking. Boots are a character's reflexes, their agility and dexterity.

When a character is testing **BOOTS**, they need to roll a 3, 4, or 5.

The **VANGUARD** (d6) is the best at rolling **BOOTS**. Play a d6 if you want to be fast, agile, or sneaky.

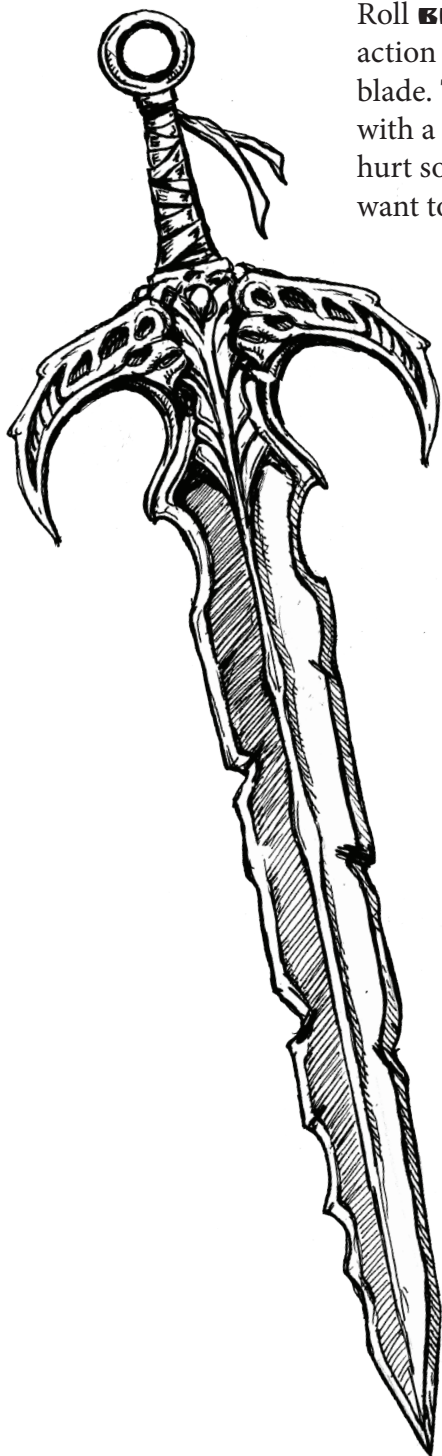


BLADES

Roll **BLADES** whenever you are testing a violent action – whether or not you are actually using a blade. This can be any type of attack – barehanded, with a weapon, or with a spell. If you are trying to hurt something (or avoid being hurt), then you want to roll Blades.

When testing **BLADES**, you need to roll 4, 5, 6, or 7.

The **FIGHTER** (d8) is the best at **BLADES**, being more accurate than the Sentinel (who does more damage). Play a d8 if you want to focus on offense.



BONES

Roll against **BONES** whenever you need to steel your resolve or resist pain and disease. **BONES** is both your body's health and your overall strength and endurance. Roll against **BONES** to save versus poisons, or to avoid getting sleepy during an all-night watch.

When testing **BONES**, you need to roll a 5, 6, 7, 8, or 9.

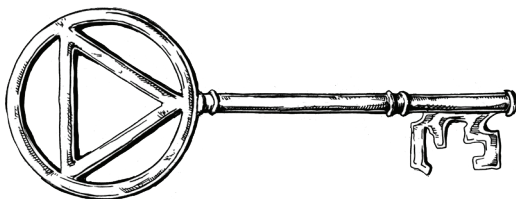
The **SENTINEL** (d10) is the best at rolling **BONES**. Play a d10 if you want to dish out damage and focus on defense.

A Note about the Paragon: You may have noticed that a **PARAGON** can't roll **BONES** naturally. They need a special resolution instead (see **KEY & CROWN**).



KEY AND CROWN

While you are making rolls against the Four Actions, there are two special results that may come up, these are shown on your character sheet – the **KEY** and the **CROWN**. Your **KEY** represents your core self – the sum of your knowledge and capability. The **CROWN** is flexible – the top of your die, and it can result in success or failure based on outside influences.



Whenever you roll a 1, if the action is something that your class or aspect can do – it's a success, this is the **KEY BONUS**. A Key result is not like the other **RESOLUTIONS** in that it's a bonus, not a direct roll. You don't try to roll your **KEY**.

❧ **EXAMPLE:** Let's say that your party is looking for a thief in a crowded room. The **MC** calls for a **BOOKS** roll. Normally, you would only succeed if you rolled a 2 or a 3, but if you are playing a character whose Class would be good at spotting a thief in a crowded room – like a Talented Thief (another thief) or a Knockabout Ranger – then you would **ALSO** succeed if you rolled a 1. ❧



Every die has a “crown” – the highest number that the die could roll (a 4 for the d4, a 10 for the d10, etc.).

When you roll the **CROWN** on your die, what happens is based on the current **DARKNESS** (see page 42). When rolling a **CROWN**, if things are currently **BRIGHT**, you succeed. If your Darkness is currently **BLEAK**, then you fail. While it is **TORCHLIT**, you can succeed, but will have to pay a cost.

Always count **SUCCESS** before looking at your Crown. If you roll a 4 on a **BOOTS** test, it's a success – regardless of whether it's a Crown for your die or not – your roll succeeds because you **ROLLED BOOTS**. This also means that while it is **BLEAK** – where players fail on Crown rolls – the Paragon would still succeed on a **BOOTS** roll with a roll of 4 because it is a **BOOTS** Success.

❧ **EXAMPLE:** *Ironwolf is a Vanguard (d6) Intrepid Ranger who is trying to dodge through a hall crowded with bugbears. She rolls **BOOTS** to dodge through the crowd and rolls a 6 (her crown). She needed to roll a 3, 4, or 5 to succeed normally. If she had rolled a 1 it would have succeeded as well, since her class is Intrepid Ranger, and running seems like something she could do. Since the **DARKNESS** is currently **TORCHLIT**, she can negotiate a success with the **MC**. Ironwolf says – “I get through the bugbears, but one of them takes a swing at me with his maul.” Later, when a similar event occurs, and the Darkness is **BLEAK** – she would fail.* ❧

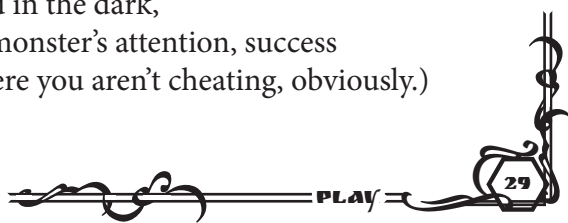
CHAOS

There will always come a time when one of the standard options for actions and saves doesn't quite work; where the outcome is still dictated by chance, but the core of the action can't be directly attributed to a character's strengths or weaknesses.

CHAOS Rolls can be used for other effects when a die roll would make something too easy, and it keeps the Maze Controller from ever needing to roll a die.

In these situations, you can make a **CHAOS** Roll. On a Chaos Roll (or Save), the character is successful on any **EVEN** result (2,4,6,8,10) and fails on any **ODD** result (1,3,5,7,9).

Example uses for Chaos Saves and Rolls: Saves against random effects, determining who gets hit by a trap, stumbling around in the dark, determining the random recipient of a monster's attention, success and failure at true games of chance (where you aren't cheating, obviously.)



RESOLVER

KEY

1

BOOKS

2 3

BOOTS

3 4 5

BLADES

4 5 6 7

BONES

5 6 7 8 9

CROWN

4 6 8 10

CHAOS
2 4 6 8 10

ADVANTAGE

Succeed if **EITHER** roll succeeds.
Hit on **BOTH** rolls, it's a **CRITICAL**.

DISADVANTAGE

Succeed only if **BOTH** rolls succeed.
Fail on **BOTH** rolls, it's a **FUMBLE**.

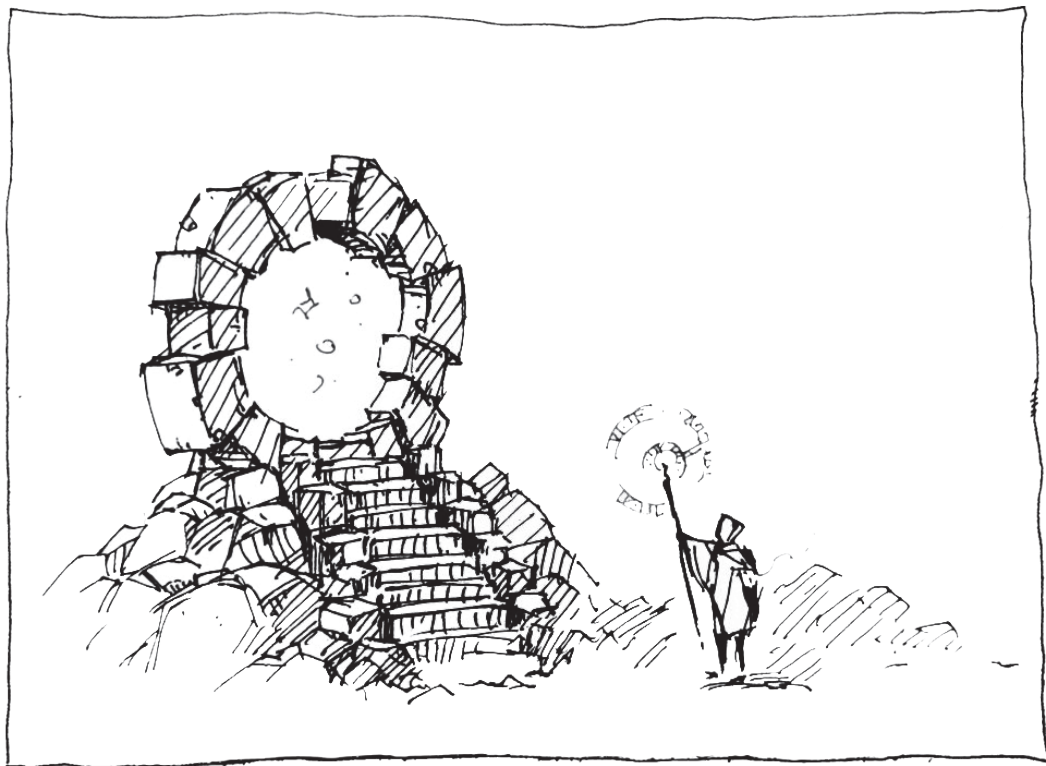
ROLES AND ROLLS

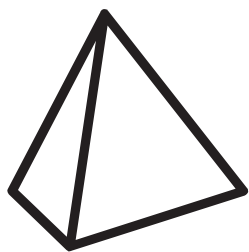
A great party is a mix of different roles – where all of the players are providing different skills and expertise, while all being good at specific types of actions. Someone provides the offense, while someone else plays defense. Someone should be mobile, while someone else provides utility.

While there are an endless combination of character concepts, classes, and backgrounds – there are only four roles. By combining a role with your other options, you will create a unique play experience. Your choice of role will determine what types of actions that you will be most successful at (and therefore will focus your activities). As a player, you should choose the role that will support what you like to do in games.

Choose your role based on **WHAT YOU WANT TO DO IN THE GAME**. Then choose a **CLASS** based on **HOW YOU WANT TO DO THAT** thing. It's totally okay to be a **SORCERY FIGHTER**, a **SHADOW SENTINEL**, or a **SWORD PARAGON**. Remember, you will be most successful when you choose a role matches what you want to do. If you want to beat things up, play a **FIGHTER**, picking **PARAGON** and then trying to beat things up will be less fun.

In Mazes, we describe roles mechanically by assigning each player a specific die.





THE PARAGON

Seize the d4, Paragon! This is your die.
You are the expert. You are the “smallest” die,
but it “explodes” the most.
You have 4 Hearts (not a lot) and 4 Stars (the most).

The **PARAGON** is the most cerebral of the character roles, focusing on thinking, talking, and their senses over combat and action. The Paragon uses their special skills more than other roles, and they shine when they are rolling against **BOOKS**.

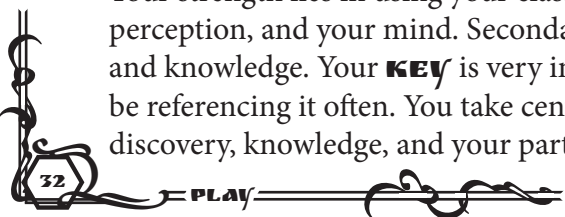
They are “the best” at what they do – they roll their **KEY** and **CROWN** far more than other roles; allowing them to succeed even in harsh situations. They have more **STARS** than other roles – allowing them to take more direct control.

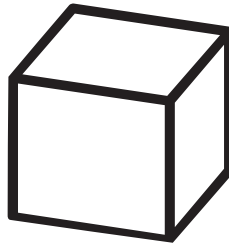
Choose the Paragon because you want to:

- 🔑 Be the best at a class ability
- 🔑 Use your instincts and intelligence
- 🔑 Solve problems
- 🔑 Investigate and use perception
- 🔑 Talk a lot
- 🔑 Make decisions
- 🔑 Use special abilities rather than basic combat

The Paragon’s weakness lies in their few Hearts, and combat rolls in general. They are easy to hurt and require help or defense from other players. When a **PARAGON** goes down, they are not likely to get up unscathed.

Your strength lies in using your class abilities, your wisdom, your perception, and your mind. Secondly, you are good at using your skills and knowledge. Your **KEY** is very important to this role, as you will be referencing it often. You take center stage when the story focuses on discovery, knowledge, and your particular skills.





THE **VANGUARD**

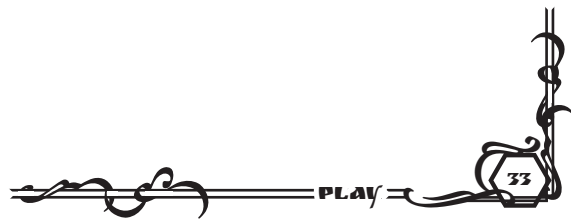
Snatch up the d6, Vanguard! This is your die.
You are always at the forefront of the action.
You have 6 Hearts and 3 Stars, a good mix.

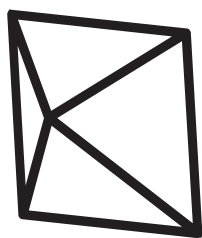
The **VANGUARD** is the most active of the character roles. They are pretty good at everything – physical action, combat, and skills. They shine when they are rolling against **BOOKS** and **BOOTS**.

Choose the Vanguard because you want to:

-  Always be in the thick of it
-  Use your instincts and intelligence
-  Be great at physical activities, like running and climbing
-  Be a decent fighter, but are okay with not being the best at it
-  Use a blend of special abilities and basic combat

The Vanguard shines when the story focuses on action, especially if their Edges are being called into play. By their nature, the Vanguard is a great fit to back up other characters. The Vanguard's biggest weakness is that everyone else is “better” than they are at most things, though everyone else also has bigger weaknesses.





THE FIGHTER

Take up the d8, Fighter! This is your die.

You are here to smash faces.

You have 8 Hearts and 2 Stars, a good mix.

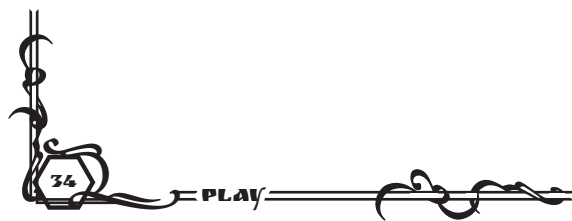
The Fighter takes center stage when the battle starts. They are at their best in combat scenes. The Fighter is always in the middle of the action during a battle, generally acting on the offensive. They shine when they are rolling **BLADES**.

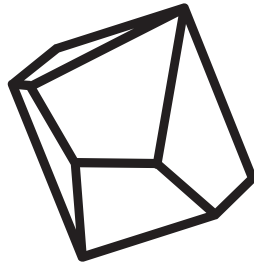
Choose the Fighter because you want to:

- ✂ Stab it, kill it, set it on fire!
- ✂ Be good at physical activities, like climbing and swimming
- ✂ Survive a beating
- ✂ Dish out some hurt
- ✂ Focus primarily on basic combat

The Fighter is the most suited to living on the dark edge of the world of Mazes. They are best in combat, but still capable in **BOOTS** and **BONES** situations. They are somewhat limited in the **BOOKS** department – but they do have 2 Stars. The Fighter is better when they are surrounded by other character roles. Fighters are good solo characters, but they are also great team players.

Your greatest strength is on the attack. A warrior type class with the fighter role is a beast in combat. Take center stage when violence is on the menu.





THE **SENTINEL**

The d10 awaits you, Sentinel! This is your die.

You are the shield that guards the party.

You have 10 Hearts (the most), but only 1 Star, which means you are hard to stop, but lacking in depth.

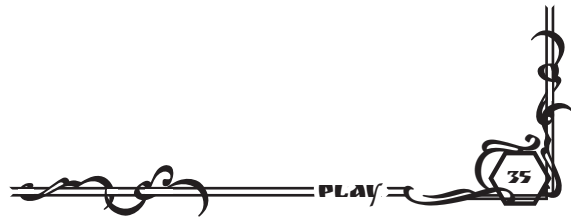
The **SENTINEL** is the most defensive of the character roles. You are good in combat, and especially good at brawn and health type tests. You do the most damage and have the greatest effect – but the Fighter is more accurate.

Choose the Sentinel because you want to:

-  Be safe and keep others safe
-  Be strong and hearty
-  Soak up damage and laugh at it
-  Defend the party
-  Deal the most damage
-  Focus primarily on basic combat, and be on the defensive

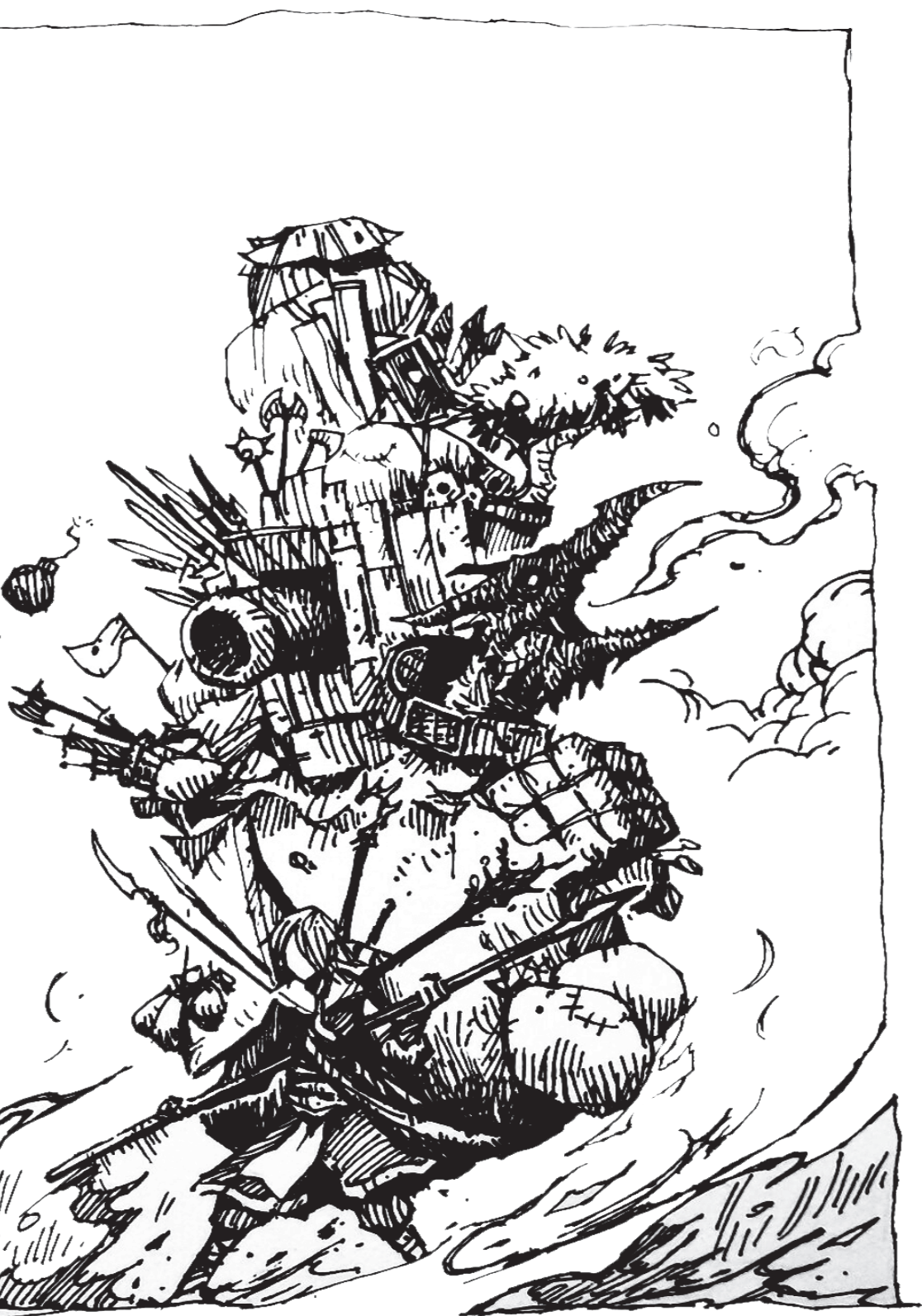
The Sentinel is weakest when it comes to using their **KEY** ability and on **BOOKS** rolls. Unlike the Paragon who strives to utilize their **KEY** bonus often, the Sentinel's Key and Crown come into the play the least.

Your strength is in your staying power. You are strong, hale, and hard to take down. You can take conditions, spend hearts, and still be effective at most things. The Sentinel is the safest of the characters – but also the one that can deal the most devastating effects.



RESOURCES





RESOURCES

“Looking cautiously around the first corner, Tomas set off– beginning his search through the maze...”

- Raymond E. Feist, *Magician*

Not all actions can be accomplished by rolling dice. In some situations, performing an action requires spending a resource to accomplish a goal. These are “costs” that are paid by the players or the Maze Controller. These actions tend to be large and impactful.

The act of paying a cost (sometimes called a spend) or rolling the dice should be the same – a spend result is equivalent to an automatic success.

The basic resources in **MAZES** are **THE MOMENT**, **HEARTS**, **STARS**, **TREASURE**, and **DARKNESS**. Hearts and Stars are individual resources. Treasure and Darkness are party resources held in common. Moments are your “turn”. Each resource controls a different aspect of the game.

MOMENTS

There is no need for clear “timing” in a **MAZES** game. In an effort to keep the game more about rulings than rules, we are actively trying **NOT** to over explain. Each player gets a Moment. Taking an action in game “spends” your Moment. A player’s Moment can be a roll, a description, an action, or a spend. The most important timing rule is that **EVERYONE** gets a **MOMENT** before anyone else gets another Moment. Then, the Maze Controller narrates the world’s response.

The structure of play is as follows:

-  In any order, each player takes a Moment or passes
-  For their moment, each player explains what they are doing
-  The MC may have that player roll or spend a resource
-  After all the players have gone, The Maze Controller takes their turn. The player’s rolls in response are Saves, and do not count as Moments.

HEARTS



A Heart represents a character's life-force and energy. It is the basic "hit point". A character's Hearts are set by their **ROLE**, equal to their **CROWN**. The more Hearts you have the harder and more able to do physical battle you are.

A character's **HEARTS** are defined by their **ROLE**.

HEARTS		
ROLE	DIE	HEARTS
PARAGON	d4 	4 
VANGUARD	d6 	6 
FIGHTER	d8 	8 
SENTINEL	d10 	10 

THE GRIND OF BATTLE

Every time a character takes a **VIOLENT ACTION**, they lose a **HEART**. Yes, this means that almost every time they make an **ATTACK ROLL**, they are spending a **HEART**! This represents the toll on a character from the exertion of battle. Attacking will lead to conditions if a character makes enough of them – becoming tired, stressed, and eventually hurt from the exertion alone.

Characters generally don't lose hearts for other types of actions. Characters don't lose Hearts for Violent Actions that are **SAVES** (defending themselves in battle, for instance), since the **SAVE** roll has its own consequences.

Characters do not lose a **HEART** when they spend a **STAR** on a Violent Action, as they are already spending a resource, this pays the "cost" of the exertion. Characters generally don't spend Hearts for any other types of actions. But they do lose them in battle...

TAKING DAMAGE

Whenever a character takes **DAMAGE**, they lose a number of **HEARTS** equal to the **DANGER** of the Hazard. The more Hearts a character has, the more damage they can take from each attack (and the longer they can keep fighting).

Monsters and characters controlled by the Maze Controller also have Hearts. When you deal damage to them, you roll your **DIE** to determine how many hearts they lose.

When a character runs out of **HEARTS**, they **GO DOWN**. When you **GO DOWN**, you must take a **CONDITION** (explained later in this section) to refill your **HEARTS** and to stand back up – if they can't take a condition, your character is out for the scene and may possibly even die!

STARS



Stars represent the special “power” that a character possesses – whether it be magical, training, wealth, or their lineage. Each **ASPECT** has a different way of “imagining” stars and what they can do. Star spends allow your character to take the spotlight and gain control of a situation. A Star can be spent for a number of things, but primarily it is spent to take some narrative control of the game – either through the use of magic or a character ability.

A character’s **STARS** are defined by their **ROLE**.

STARS

ROLE	DIE	STARS
PARAGON	d4 	4★
VANGUARD	d6 	3★
FIGHTER	d8 	2★
SENTINEL	d10 	1★

SPENDING STARS

A character spends their **STARS** to do magic and take special actions. Like Hearts, a character can refill their Stars by taking a Condition – either as a result of going down or taking a **REST ACTION**.

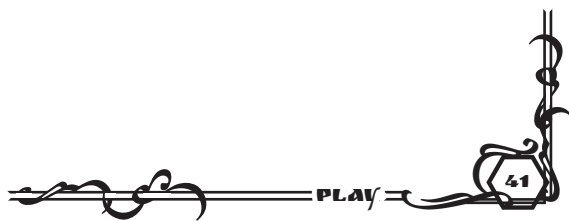
When a Character spends a Star, they are putting themselves in the center of the story and doing something out of the ordinary. Spending a Star, if approved by the **MC**, guarantees success. The **MC** may not accept what you want to spend your Star for, but if they do accept the spend you always get the effect. Star spends **NEVER** require a roll.

Each of the Aspects in Mazes uses Stars in a slightly different way, but they have some things in common. How a character might use their Stars is described under **ASPECT** (page 58) as well as specific examples given within some class descriptions.

FLASHBACKS AND DETAILS

Regardless of their Aspect, a player can always spend a Star to establish something about the game world and their character – such as creating friends and contacts, “hand waving” details, and declaring new things about their character or the world’s past.

❧ **EXAMPLE:** *Ravella is a witch. She spends one of her **STARS** during a game to establish that she spent a lot of time in the Birchwood as a young adept. The **MC** thinks this is fair, and so accepts the Star spend. Now Ravella has additional insights about the place. Later in the game, as a Wise Soothsayer, she spends a Star to use her **FAMILIAR** (an Edge) to take the spotlight – having her giant flying eel companion flow out from her voluminous robes and carry her out of the shaft she has fallen into. ❧*

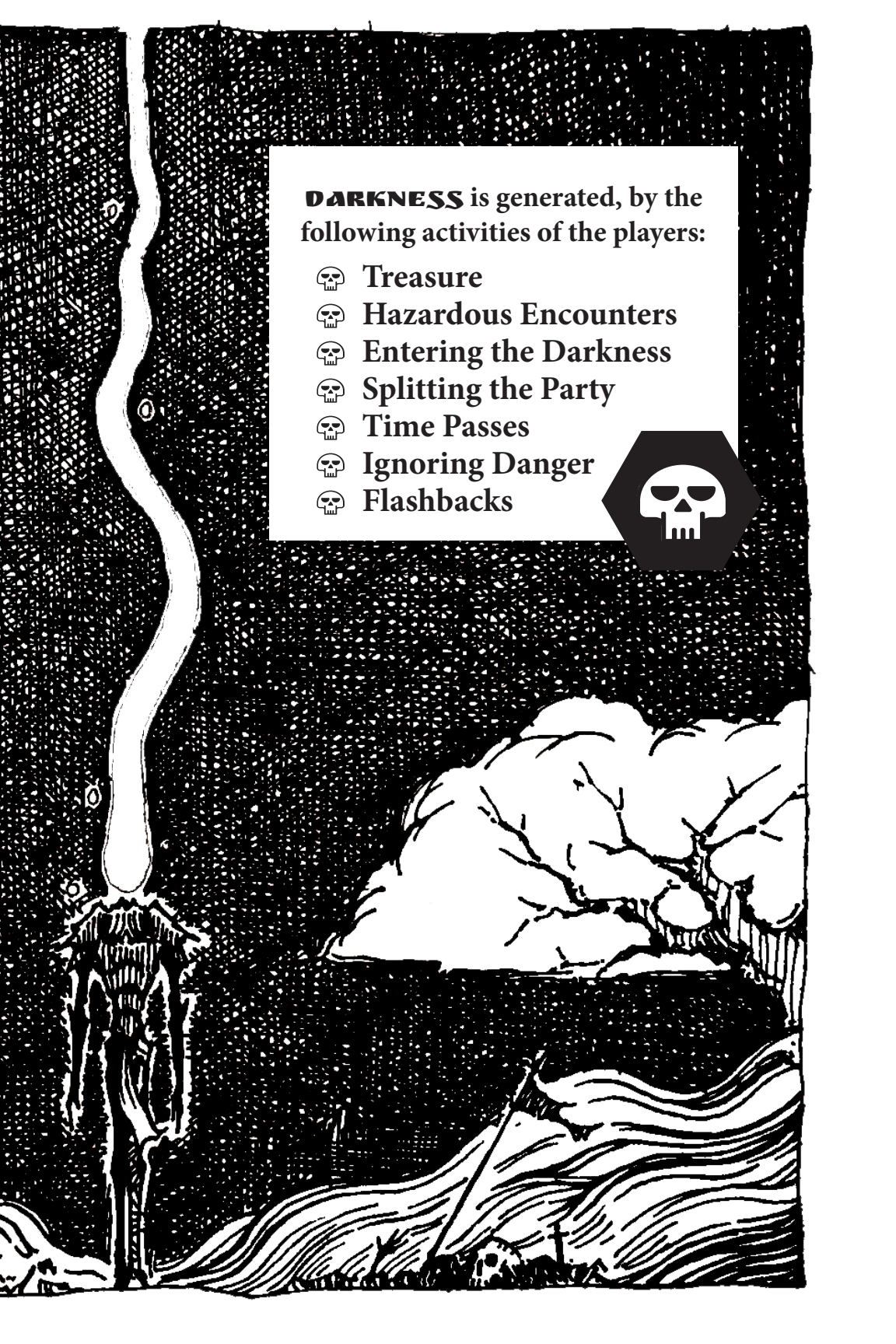


GATHER, DARKNESS!

Throughout the adventure, a party will generate **DARKNESS**, which is both a resource for the **MC** and a signpost to the players of how dangerous the current situation has become. You can track Darkness with a d12, a play aid, or tokens – but Darkness should be visible to all of the players.

The **MC** uses the **DARKNESS** level as an aid to telling the story and as a pacing mechanism. In addition, the **MC** can spend **DARKNESS** as “fuel” for obstacles and monsters. The **MC** will give the players Treasure based on their story. Our rule of thumb is that a maze will contain at least one more potential treasure than the number of adventurers. While the Maze Controller controls what Treasure is possible, Darkness is created by the actions and activities of the players.





DARKNESS is generated, by the following activities of the players:

- ☠ Treasure
- ☠ Hazardous Encounters
- ☠ Entering the Darkness
- ☠ Splitting the Party
- ☠ Time Passes
- ☠ Ignoring Danger
- ☠ Flashbacks





TREASURE

Darkness can be set by the party based on their starting treasure reserves, and funding new expeditions. This can be an arbitrary spend (in a one-shot game) or a spend from their wealth reserves.

At the start of the game, the party determines how much **TREASURE** they have. The amount of treasure and the starting Darkness are set to the same number. How the party answers the leading questions at setup may increase or decrease the starting Darkness. Each of their potential “answers” as to why they are in the dungeon, can have a “Darkness Cost.” If they’re only there to steal, maybe it’s +0 Darkness, but if they are there to fight their ancient rival, it’s +3 Darkness.



HAZARDOUS ENCOUNTERS

Whenever the party encounters a **HAZARD** (a monster, trap, environment, or other peril), the **MC** gains a **DARKNESS**. Mechanically, this means that when the party has an Encounter, the **MC** should have at least 1 Darkness to spend per “encounter”, as well as being a signal to the party that there is something specific for them to overcome. The **MC** doesn’t have to spend the Darkness generated by an encounter, which allows them to ramp up the overall danger of the session at their own pace.



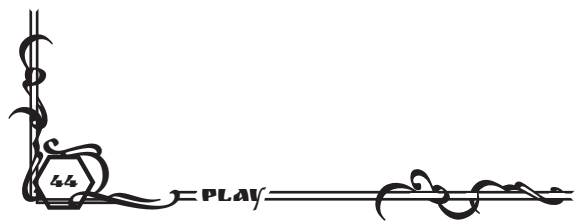
ENTERING THE DARKNESS

This is both physical and metaphorical darkness – when the characters enter a scene or area which is dark or unknown (where they don’t know what is going on) they are increasing the Darkness. This is always the **FIRST ACTION** of a game – as the party crosses the threshold into the unknown, they will always be giving the Maze Controller at least one Darkness.



SPLITTING THE PARTY

Finally, whenever the party splits into smaller groups, add a Darkness. Splitting the party is sometimes necessary, but if the **MC** puts the fear of splitting up into their minds early, the party will stay together (which means more action and a more streamlined story).





TIME PASSES

Time Passes is a catch all for being passive or wasting time. Whenever the party chooses to take actions that will either take a lot of time, or where they decide to wait for something to happen – add a Darkness. As an aside, we have found that threatening to take a Darkness for time passing is a great way to get a party to decide on an action.

Since the characters are the protagonists of the story when they wait for things to happen or are indecisive or slow– they are giving the **mc** the ball and they get a Darkness.

When they take actions (often good, solid, proactive actions) that will take a lot of time to complete, the **mc** takes a Darkness to show the “cost” of spending the time.



IGNORING DANGER

If the party seems to be ignoring the dangerous situation they are in, that creates Darkness. Making a lot of noise in a silent tomb– add a Darkness. Running across an ancient rickety bridge in full armor – add a Darkness. Sticking your hand into the mouth of demon statue without inspecting it – add a Darkness. Opening a door and then running away, that’s a Darkness!

For the party this means that they can try anything – but there are consequences. For the Maze Controller it is a powerful way to steer the actions of the characters without railroading them through a maze.



FLASHBACKS

The most interesting of all reasons for adding Darkness is the Flashback. At any time, the players can call for a Flashback to establish something about the game, their characters, the **mc** characters, etc. These Flashback scenes have a cost in that they add a Darkness to the pool, but they can also be a great way to create advantage for the players (the old wizard told us about how to avoid a speartoad’s deadly venom), to describe a reason for something being prepared (the old wizard gave you a whistle to summon a heavy wind), or to establish story and connection (the old wizard never told you that he was your father).

Flashback scenes should be resolved both immediately and quickly. You can have a Flashback in the middle of a scene. Encourage the players to use Flashbacks to their advantage, as this will increase their “ownership” of the story and drive a rich and engaging narrative experience.

THE RISING DARKNESS

DARKNESS isn't simply a resource – it's a barometer of the danger and a way to provide pacing and control to a story. As the Darkness rises, things get harder for the characters. Over the course of a game, it will continue to rise and get more deadly.

BRIGHT



1, 2, 3 Darkness



While the **DARKNESS** is 3 or less, things look “**BRIGHT**” – they are fresh, clear, and in relative control. While this is happening, the parties' lamps are shining, and their bellies are full. While it is Bright the players **ALWAYS** succeed when they roll a **CROWN**. Things are easy and safe. If things are Bright while rolling against **DEATH'S DOOR**, the roll is **ADVANTAGED**.

TORCHLIT



4, 5, 6 Darkness



Things are **TORCHLIT** while the Darkness is under 7. This is the main meat of any adventure – many adventures will start with the characters in this state. There are no advantages or disadvantages when things are torchlit.

When a character rolls their **CROWN**, they may spend a **STAR** or **TREASURE** or make a deal with the Maze Controller to succeed. In some situations, they may be able to take a narrative concession. This is called a “negotiated success”.

BLEAK



7+ Darkness



If the Darkness is more than 7, things are **BLEAK**.

When things are Bleak, the characters **ALWAYS** lose on a **CROWN** roll. The mood is dark, gritty, and scary. If things are Bleak while rolling against **DEATH'S DOOR**, the roll is **DISADVANTAGED**.



TREASURE AND WEALTH



“A land of dangerous villains, volcanoes, underground mazes, and ruthless spies– to find the treasure”

- Rose Estes, The Lost Treasure of Sheba

The accumulation of treasure is often the only real goal of an adventuring party. Within Mazes, all treasure and wealth has been abstracted, as this isn't a game about accounting or shopping. **TREASURE** is a group resource shared in common by the party. **WEALTH** represents the assets that a character has and determines what their lifestyle looks like outside of games.

Treasure is fungible. It rises and falls, it is spent, lost, and gained over the course of a game session. It represents the total of the free and available goods that the party has access to – their equipment and gear, their loose cash, and their other physical and immaterial goods. Through the course of an adventure, a party will spend Treasure for effects and gain Treasure as loot and rewards.

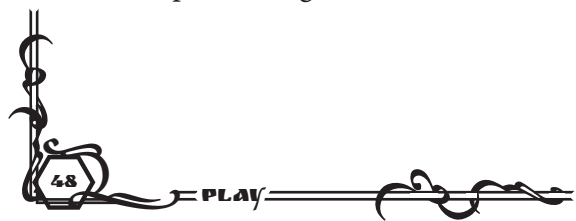
Treasure can be used as equipment, to generate advantage, and ultimately to pay expenses and purchase higher lifestyles and fund new expeditions. Treasure can be spent as a negotiation point with the **mc**.

STARTING WEALTH AND LIFESTYLE

Unless a class or the **mc** says otherwise, all starting characters are assumed to have paid for a Copper Lifestyle and have **2 WEALTH**.

GAINING TREASURE

TREASURE is an abstract idea. It's not a pile of coin, it's just the idea of a pile of coins. Whenever the party acquires things of value regardless of type, they add a **TREASURE** to their pile. That evil mercenary had a chest of gold – a Treasure. You find a pile of magic scrolls in the Wizard's room – nice, Two Treasures.



DARKNESS EFFECTS TREASURE

While it is **BRIGHT** or **TORCHLIGHT** any **TREASURE** spent affects the entire party.

When it is **BLEAK**, **TREASURE** spends only affect a single player.

If the amount of Treasure that a party has dips below the number of players, the party becomes **SKINT** which adds a **DARKNESS**. If the amount of Treasure that the party has is double the number of players, then the party becomes **ENCUMBERED** which adds a Darkness.

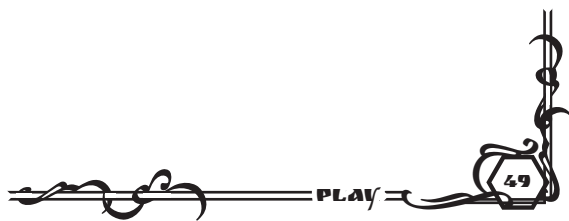
SPENDING A TREASURE TO CREATE EQUIPMENT AND ADVANTAGE

A player can spend a **TREASURE** to have the necessary equipment to accomplish a task. This works in a simple way – you tell the **MC** what equipment you have, and you spend the Treasure.

While the party could have anything in their packs – those things should be kept within reason, they should be things that they could conceivably have. It makes sense that you may have packed fishing poles, antitoxin, wolfsbane, hammer and pitons, or even a cage of doves. It is unlikely that you have a lock of a princess's hair (without a Flashback), the key to an ancient chest, or a long-lost amulet of protection.

Most of the time, this is done in place of making a roll (oh, we have a ladder, we don't need to climb check this wall). Sometimes, the party will need to find a way to create Advantage that doesn't come from their Edges. Treasure can be used to create temporary **ADVANTAGE**.

❧ **EXAMPLE:** *“I reach into my pouch and pull out marbles to pour on the stairway,” or “we packed lanterns, so we can light them to see in this darkness,” or “I have a Potion of Invisibility in my bag,” or “I packed ropes and pitons, so that we can scale this wall..* ❧



TREASURE IS A GROUP RESOURCE BUT A PERSONAL CHOICE

Treasure is held in common by all of the players. Players should track their treasure via tokens, a d12, or with a play aid.

ANY PLAYER may spend a **TREASURE** as their action – they do not need agreement or to ask the other players to use it. **TREASURE** represents the gear, equipment, and gold that the party has distributed amongst the party.

FUNDING AN EXPEDITION

When getting ready to go on an adventure – the members of the party need to fund their expedition, as well as settle their lifestyle.

Increase the party’s starting treasure coffers by 1 **TREASURE** by spending 2 Wealth or spending 1 Wealth and giving the **mc** 1 Darkness.

EXPEDITION



or



per Treasure.

ROLL FOR TREASURE

	LOOT	WEALTH
1	MAGIC ITEM	?
2	STRANGE LOOT*	
3	ELECTRUM COINS	
4	GEMSTONES	 
5	ANCIENT COINS	 
6	PRECIOUS OBJECT	
7	WORTHLESS JUNK	-
8	GOLD OBJECT	 
9	SILVER COINS	
10	GOLD COINS	 

 May instead take LORE.

*Trade to an NPC for the FRIEND EDGE.

THE EPILOGUE

When the adventurers return from the Maze, there is special phase called **THE EPILOGUE**. During this time, the players have the opportunity to heal, pay upkeep, and advance their characters.

In order, each of the players:

-  **Rest and Recover**
-  **Roll for Treasure**
-  **Pay Expenses: Lifestyle Upkeep and Upgrade**
-  **Change or Advance their Character**
-  **Perform any closing rituals**

REST AND RECOVERY

When the party returns from an adventure, if any of the characters are **HURT** – the party must first spend a Treasure to heal everyone in the party.

ROLL FOR TREASURE

After healing up, each player rolls their **DIE** once for each **TREASURE** the party has remaining. If the party has 3 **TREASURE** in their coffers, each player rolls their die 3 times. Most of the time, “treasure” will be coins or simple items that can be converted directly into Wealth. But it could be magic, lore, or extra valuables.

When Magic Items or Weapons are found work with your **MC** to determine the effect. Whenever a character gains a new Edge, they can choose to add that **MAGIC ITEM** or **MAGIC WEAPON** to their character; or they can choose to drop any existing Edge and take the **ITEM** or **WEAPON** right now. Until then, they may carry that item but knowing how to use it correctly is a different matter. A player may spend a Magic Item they have as a Treasure while in a Maze.

A roll of **STRANGE LOOT** means that this particular treasure is something of great value to another group – perhaps a local lord, a powerful sorceress, or a bugbear tribe. It can either be “sold” for 1 Wealth, “given” to that party for a one-time use of the **FRIENDS** edge, or something else.

If a player rolls their **CROWN** on this roll, they may instead choose to take **LORE** – having found something of value to their character, but not of obvious sellable worth (this could be a plot hook for another session, a family heirloom, a cultural artifact, etc.). Work with your **MC** to understand how to resolve this item. After making these rolls, total all of the **WEALTH** and divide it amongst the players however the party sees fit.

EXPENSES

WEALTH is a character's individual goods, coin, and how they fund their **LIFESTYLE**. In a campaign, or series of connected games, a character needs to spend Wealth to maintain their Lifestyle. All of a character's expenses are handled by their **LIFESTYLE**, or via spending Wealth. Each Lifestyle denotes the costs of things the character can assume that they are able to buy without a problem (i.e. not spending Wealth). You could hire a mercenary by spending a **WEALTH**, or acquire a room at an inn. Anything that you would normally think about spending money on, can be acquired by spending treasure— food, drink, vices, etc. Things that are within your Lifestyle are just acquired.

Unless stated otherwise, characters start campaigns at a **COPPER** lifestyle. Why else would you be adventuring?

UPGRADING YOUR LIFESTYLE

While paying your **EXPENSES**, you can choose to spend Wealth to increase your Tier. It costs 5 Wealth to move up a tier and assumes you can pay for it at the start of future adventures.

LIFESTYLE

Characters with the **WEALTH** or **RANK** Edge, increase their Lifestyle by 1 Tier. The **FRIENDS** edge allows a character to act as if they have a Lifestyle 1 Tier higher while active in their friend's domain.

GOLD

Spend 1 Wealth a session, or fall to Silver

This character is extremely wealthy and can easily purchase fine goods and excellent services. Their pouch is filled with gold monarchs and dragons. They don't need to worry about the cost of anything, they have it. They have access to the best food, can own land, have servants, and are otherwise rich.

LIFESTYLES

Pay  to raise a tier.

Pay  or fall a tier:

GOLD— Per Session

SILVER— Per Season

COPPER— Per Year

BROKE— Take **STRESSED** or **TIRED** at session start.

While in the **GOLD TIER** spending a wealth can purchase a boat, land, rare valuables, and the like.

SILVER

Spend 1 Wealth a season, or fall to Copper

This character is doing well for themselves. Their pouch is full of silver falcons and the odd electrum piece. They can afford to stay in inns, buy meals, they may own a home in a city or town, or possibly a farm or ranch. They have quality clothes, weapons, and tools. They have no problem eating and drinking well. They can spend a **WEALTH** to temporarily live **GOLD** – to host a lavish affair, acquire a mount, etc.

COPPER

Spend 1 Wealth a year, or fall to Broke

This character is surviving. They have a purse with copper pennies and filed, tarnished silver groats. They have a place to sleep and spend their days working or traveling. Their boots need mending and their cloak needs patching, but they can eat a hot meal every day.

BROKE

This character is destitute. Each day is a struggle for food and shelter– they are sleeping in the streets or out in the wilderness. They eat whatever they can get their hands on and they are desperate. At the start of every game session a **BROKE** Character takes either the **STRESSED** or **TIRED** condition.

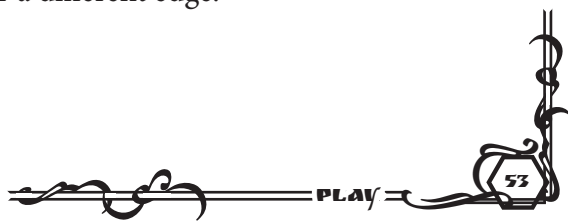
ADVANCES

Now that the adventure is over, and you are settled back at the inn to reflect, you have the opportunity to change, or advance your character.

If this was their first Adventure, you may choose to exchange **ANY** edge that the character has for another edge (but not an advance). This shows that a character has grown or changed.

If this is the second Adventure that the Character has survived, they may **ADD** an edge. This Edge can be any edge (including Advances). This shows the growth that the character has undergone over the course of their career.

Beyond that, each time a character successfully completes an Adventure – they have the option to exchange any edge for a different edge.



CONDITIONS

“He moved as far within the stony maze as he could go, found a reasonably level spot, collapsed there and slept.”

- Roger Zelazny, *Jack of Shadows*

A condition is a special kind of cost that players take as a result of certain actions. Conditions limit a character in some way and have a method for removing (or clearing) themselves. Conditions are most often taken as a result of “going down” or result from specific hazards (such as being frozen or poisoned).

A **CONDITION** can be treated like any other **EDGE** in a Mazes game – in that it describes a character, can be invoked, and explains how and why things happen. Unlike other Edges, Conditions are (generally) **NEGATIVE** and **TEMPORARY**.

STANDARD CONDITIONS

While there can be countless conditions, most are specific to situations and environments. Every character has three “standard” conditions – Stressed, Tired, and Hurt, which are listed on the character sheet. There is also a space for another condition.

You can only have a condition once. If you would take a condition that you already have, you must select another condition to take. If you can’t take a condition (because they are full), you must go **DOWN**.

If you already have a condition, and you would have to take that condition again – you instead take the next condition down the chain.

STRESSED » TIRED » HURT » DOWN

FAILING A SAVE

In some situations, you will gain a **CONDITION** because you failed a **SAVE** roll (when fighting against the Mushroom Assassin, you fail your Blades roll, and take **POISONED**). In other situations, an obstacle or environment will impose a condition instead of doing damage (the Murder Ghost doesn’t do damage when it hits, it saps strength – causing the **TIRED** condition).

When you take a non-standard condition (like Blinded or On Fire), the **MC** will explain what you need to do, or what effects are in play. If you would take that condition again, you then take a standard condition instead.

RESTING

A player can spend their action to rest and catch their breath, in order to refill their **HEARTS** and **STARS** to their full value. As a result of this action, you must take a condition. In many cases the story will determine which Condition you should take, but in cases where you are taking a standard Condition to refill your Hearts (or Stars), you may choose which Condition you take.

DROPPING to ZERO

When a Character drops to 0 Hearts, they go down, and take the **DOWN** condition. When you go down, you have to either receive “**HEALING**” or “**KNOCK ON DEATH’S DOOR**” in order to get back into the fight.

If another character spends an action to **AID** you, you can roll on the **HEALING CHART**.

If you choose (or if no one is able to aid you), you can stare Death in the Eye and knock on the door to the afterlife (by rolling on **KNOCK ON DEATH’S DOOR**).

While it is possible to take **DOWN** directly as an effect (such as being knocked unconscious, or falling off a roof) – usually, you will take **DOWN** as a condition because you are already **HURT** and have to take **HURT** again (or another cascading condition), or you were reduced to 0 Hearts.

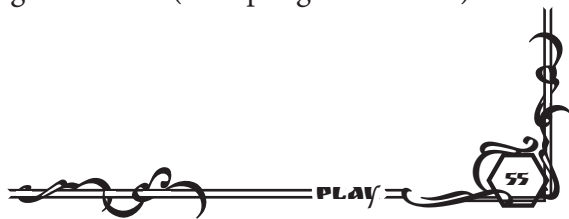
KNOCKING ON DEATH’S DOOR

Every time you knock on **DEATH’S DOOR**, you are tempting fate and your soul lies in the balance. If Death doesn’t take you, you are still marked by the experience – take “Marked”. While you are “**MARKED**” you are at Disadvantage for future **DEATH’S DOOR** rolls.

CLEARING a CONDITION

It is not expected that a character will clear a standard condition during game play (except where it says so on the Healing chart). During a session, characters can only clear a condition with a some heroic effort, or for non-standard conditions, with an action listed with the condition.

During the Epilogue, a character **CLEARs** all of their conditions (including Hurt, Marked, and Wounded). There is not a cost to clear Tired or Stressed or Marked, but Hurt and Wounded requires spending a Treasure (see Epilogue for more).



CONDITION EFFECTS

Stressed – While you are stressed you are **DISADVANTAGED** on all **BOOKS** Rolls. While Stressed, you cannot take advantage of the **KEY BONUS**.

Tired– While you are tired you are **DISADVANTAGED** on all **BOOTS** and **BONES** Rolls.

Hurt – While you are hurt you are **DISADVANTAGED** on all **BLADES** Rolls.

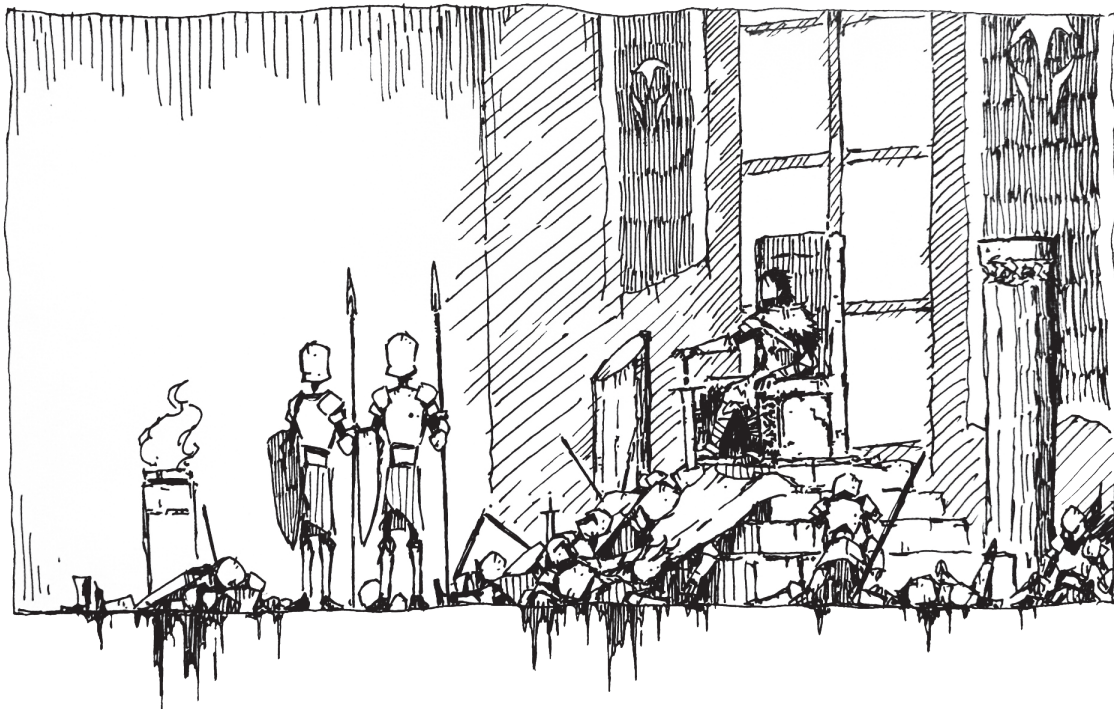
Down– While you are down you cannot take any actions until you receive aid from another character or Knock On Death's Door.

Wounded – You have taken a dangerous wound. Describe it. The Maze Controller can call upon your wound to force a disadvantage in situations where your injury interferes. Most importantly, anytime you go down you must roll on Death's Door.

Marked – You have knocked upon Death's Door and are marked. When rolling against Death's Door, you are disadvantaged.

Other Potential Conditions you may see in games could include:

Blind, Charmed, Deaf, Frightened, Held (Restrained or Paralyzed), Invisible, Lost, Petrified (Turned to Stone), Poisoned, Prone, On Fire, or Veteran





When you **RECIEVE AID** or **HEALING** roll on this table:

HEALING	
1 GASP!	Knock on Death's Door.
2 WOUNDED!	Take Wounded. Clear Down.
3	Fill your Hearts and Stars.
4+ STAND!	Clear Down. Fill your Hearts and Stars.



When you **KNOCK ON DEATH'S DOOR** roll on this table:

You Knock upon **DEATH'S DOOR**. Who answers? (*Remember, if you are **MARKED**, you roll against this at disadvantage.*)

DEATH'S DOOR	
1 DEATH!	Death takes you!
2 SHOOK!	Take Marked. On your next turn, make a Healing Roll.
3	
4+ STAND!	Take Marked. Clear Down. Fill your Hearts and Stars.



ASPECTS

An **ASPECT** is the way that a character approaches the world. In Mazes, **ASPECTS** are useful groupings used to divide up character types, or to provide some additional background. Which **ASPECT** you select determines the list of available classes for you to play. It is also a signpost indicating the equipment you carry and the experiences of your life. Most importantly, it determines what it looks like when you spend **STARS**.

When dealing damage and making attacks, the mechanic is easy. Your **DAMAGE** is the **EFFECT** – so roll your die. The player attacks and deals damage with the same die that they roll for everything else. The d4 and the d10 have a sizably different Effect– but they could both be the same thing “in the fiction” – a sword, a fireball, or a smashing shield. The style of that fiction is based on your **ASPECT**– the look and feel of your equipment, weapons, and gear will be different than other Aspects. Your Aspect determines if you carry a sword or sling a wand – if you wear occult robes or darkly oiled leathers.

A Shadow with a dagger might be a d6 or a d8 if they have chosen the role of a Vanguard or a Fighter respectively. If you are a Sorcerer that shoots lightning bolts and hurls magic missiles, or you are a Sword with a Great Axe – either way you are rolling a d10 – both Sentinels that deal a lot of damage. The difference is in the fiction. An aging knight with a sword that has taken an orphan under their wing, and the witch who specializes in potent divination are both Paragon roles but with different Aspects – one a Sword, the other a Sorcerer. Both have a d4 of **EFFECT** in combat, its just that one has an old sword and the other or knitting needles.

There are many potential **ASPECTS** beyond these three core aspects presented here – Sword, Shadow, and Sorcery. Mazes Fantasy Roleplay is focused on the idea of dungeon exploration, and these three are the holy trinity of that particular story. Other contexts (such as wilderness exploration, building strongholds, or surviving on city streets) call for different aspects.

In Mazes, you select your Aspect by answering a simple question:

How Do You Solve Your Problems? I solve problems...

...by the edge of my **SWORD**.

...from the embrace of the **SHADOWS**.

...with my eldritch **SORCERY**.

SWORD ASPECT

I solve problems by the edge of my **SWORD**.

- ✦ The Dangerous Bravo
- ✦ The Jaded Sellsword
- ✦ The Knockabout Ranger
- ✦ The Monster Slayer
- ✦ The Outcast Bugbear
- ✦ The Reluctant Hero
- ✦ The Savage Barbarian
- ✦ The Valiant Dragoon



Choosing the **SWORD ASPECT** means that you are a martial character. You are a warrior, mercenary, or soldier of fortune. You are most likely armored and have weapons and fighting skills. Your core power comes from your knowledge and abilities in combat.

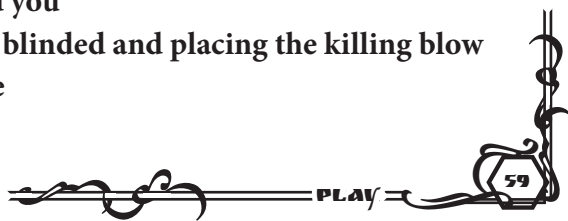
Characters with a **SWORD** Aspect are all about fighting, and so tend to have military style weapons and armor. Swords, axes, polearms, and bows are all good weapons especially those with specific names – like longswords, claymores, halberds, etc.

Vanguards and Paragons focus on speedier things – like rapiers and cutlasses; where the other roles are inclined towards large weapons like greatswords, battle clubs, and heavy maces. Sentinels and Warriors tend to wear scalemail, platemail, and knight's armor, where the other roles tend towards chainmail or leather armor.

When a **SWORD** spends a **STAR**, they are utilizing their combat knowledge or experience as a warrior– resulting in actions that appear like martial maneuvers, well thought out attacks, the use of special equipment, or coordinated actions.

Example **SWORD STAR** spends:

- ★ A coup de grace to end a climactic battle
- ★ Setting a shield wall with your retainers against a doom rhino
- ★ Spinning with your scimitar attacking everyone in the room
- ★ Breaking the chains that bind you
- ★ Calmly ignoring that you are blinded and placing the killing blow
- ★ Throwing an axe to cut a rope



SHADOW ASPECT

I solve problems from the embrace of the **SHADOWS**.

- 🔑 The Adventurous Smallfolk
- 🔑 The Cursed Tomb Robber
- 🔑 The Excellent Vagabond
- 🔑 The Filthy Urchin
- 🔑 The Nighthawk Assassin
- 🔑 The Puzzling Locksmith
- 🔑 The Talented Thief
- 🔑 The Zealous Cultist



Choosing the **SHADOW ASPECT** means that you have embraced the shadows – stealth, subterfuge, and skills are your bywords. You focus your energies on the darker side of the coin – you may fight with regular weapons, but you also rely on your skills and tools. Your core power stems from your knowledge and specialization.

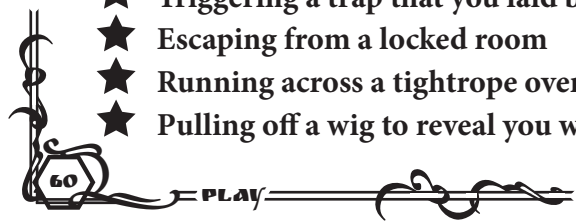
Since your focus isn't on military weapons or sorcery, your weapons are more likely to be handheld, stealthier, and more "common" – knives, daggers, poniards, and even the occasional hammer. Your weapons tend to be more ornate– like jeweled rapiers or complicated hand crossbows.

Armor is less usual for **SHADOW** characters, who tend to focus more on ease of movement or style. Shadows almost always wear leather armor of some kind – jackets, vests, jacks. It is common for Shadow Aspect characters to wear fancy clothes when possible, eschewing armor for polished or professional looks.

Spending a **STAR** as a Shadow Aspect character is usually to show your preparedness and abilities – flashes of insight, well thought out and timely gear, careful plots, and ancient techniques.

Example **SHADOW STAR** spends:

- ★ A coup de grace to end a climactic battle
- ★ Striking with a poisoned knife
- ★ Triggering a trap that you laid behind your foe
- ★ Escaping from a locked room
- ★ Running across a tightrope over a stream of lava
- ★ Pulling off a wig to reveal you were there all along



SORCERY ASPECT

I solve problems with my eldritch **SORCERY**.



The Blazing Magician
The Guild Mage
The Haunted Librarian
The Infernal Summoner
The Last If
The Quack Alchemist
The Underground Druid
The Wise Witch



Choosing **SORCERY** means that you want to use capital “M” Magic and wield mysterious powers. You may be a thinker or a fighter, but your core power comes from the magic that you wield. You most likely know spells, wield a magic item, or have powers from a magical lineage.

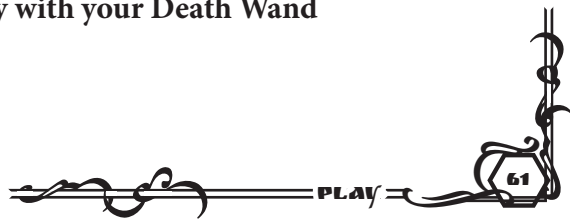
Sorcerers may carry swords or other military weapons, but they tend to use magic as their attack form – casting spells of lightning or fire or force. It is common for a sorcerer to carry a wand, staff, orb, dagger, or other talisman.

Few sorcerers wear armor, but they may enrobe themselves in magical defenses either in the form of spells and illusions or as magical rings and amulets of protection. Most Sorcery characters in Mazes wear robes or practical tunics with cloaks.

STARS are very important to a Sorcerer, the very the core of the Sorcery aspect; you spend Stars to cast spells, utilize powerful items, and have rare materials.

Example **SORCERY STAR** spends:

- ★ Cast a magic spell
- ★ Summon a demon
- ★ Hurl a fireball to damage the whole room
- ★ Have knowledge of an ancient and forgotten god
- ★ Let your dragonblood flow and breathe fire
- ★ Suck the soul out of an enemy with your Death Wand



CLASS

In **MAZES**, a Class – based on your Aspect– is a special type of **EDGE**. It not only describes a character (and can be used as an Edge itself), but it also reveals a series of questions that will provide you with other, related Edges.

Your **MC** will determine which classes are available per the adventure that they are running.

The classes defined in these books are not all of the possible classes in Mazes. If you want to create something specific talk with your **MC**. Everyone has a **CLASS**, even if it is something that you made up. A Class is always a descriptive name (an Adjective and a Noun) and then a set of 3 **EDGES** (or sets of choices). When creating your own classes, you can follow the process below, or you can simply assign 3 Edges and a Class name to a character.

HOW DO CLASSES WORK?

A Class is an Edge. When you take (or make) a class, write down the name of the **CLASS** in the **CLASS** box on the Character Sheet. The Class defines your Key Bonus and your primary fiction in the world.

THE MONSTER SLAYER

A Monster Slayer is always **WELL ARMED**.

As a hunter of vicious monsters, are you **MAZEWISE** or do you have a Loyal Hounds (**RETAINERS**)?

Are you **CUNNING**, **DEXTEROUS**, or **STRONG**?

Some classes will show Edges with choices such as Magic Item (Domain)– where you will need to choose a domain. Others will have a pre-defined choice which is shown with the edge in parentheses. (Like **RETAINERS** in our example.)

A stock Class defines Edges by a statement and two questions. When you create Classes, you should follow this pattern. The first statement is an “always,” every member of that Class will always have this Edge.

❧ **EXAMPLE:** A **MONSTER SLAYER** is always **WELL ARMED**. **MONSTER SLAYERS** are skilled in the use of a vast variety of weapons, all the better to kill monsters with. ❧

Next there is a question, that determines what style of that Class you are most like. Most Classes will have a simple divide – internal versus external, offensive versus defensive, etc.

❧ **EXAMPLE:** As a hunter of monsters, are you **MAZEWISE** or do you have a Pack of Loyal Hounds (**RETAINERS**)? Do you bring down game with your harrying dogs (**RETAINERS**), or are you more cerebral, studying monsters' habits and lives (**MAZEWISE**)? ❧

The final question determines something about the character traits necessary to become that Class – the core abilities or attributes of that class.

❧ **EXAMPLE:** Is your best attribute that you are **CUNNING**, **DEXTEROUS**, or **STRONG**? Are you good at hunting monsters because you are massive (**STRONG**), because you are good with your hands (**DEXTEROUS**), or because you are good at getting into the minds of the monsters (**CUNNING**)? ❧

Each Character Class has some additional information listed with the class – Recruiting, Drives, Names, and Kit. All of this information is presented as a guide to help players and maze controllers to make cool characters – none of it is meant to be proscriptive, and it does not have any specific mechanical connections.

Recruiting gives a short reason why a party would want to have a character of that type in their party. Names are a list of potentially cool names for characters of this class. Drives are reasons that a character may give up a normal life and head out for a life of adventure and danger. Kit is sample look and feel to a character – what they might be holding, using, wearing, or hiding on their person.



EDGES

Beyond a character's **ASPECT** and **ROLE** within the game, we define specific characters by using **EDGES**. An Edge is like an adjective – it describes a character. An **EDGE** is anything about a character that defines them. Most Edges are ways to gain advantage (or prevent Disadvantage). Players use Edges to explain why a character can do something (or could do something); or why they should have advantage while doing something. Using an Edge in this way is called “invoking” or “calling” the Edge. Most of the time, a player will invoke an **EDGE** to gain **ADVANTAGE** on an **ACTION** or **SAVE** Roll; or to gain information.

Edges are simple, understandable concepts – **KEEN**, **BEAUTIFUL**, **CONJURATION MAGIC**. They should be specific but not too specific. **TWO HEADED AXES** is too specific, but **WELL ARMED** is good. Most **EDGES** are from the list here. Some things act like an **EDGE** without being from the Edge list – especially **CONDITIONS** and **CLASSES**. Players and Maze Controllers can invoke a Class or a condition in the same way that you would invoke an edge.

When creating a character, you may find that you have an idea that the list of **EDGES** included in **MAZES** doesn't account for – that's okay the list isn't supposed to be comprehensive. In that case, talk with the **MC** about your idea. The list of potential Edges is endless. If there is a specific concept for an Edge that a player wants, that isn't creating a new Class (as every Class acts as an Edge), discuss, and decide if you want to add it to the list. Don't just create **EDGES** willy-nilly though – our experience is that these edges cover most of what is needed for a dungeon adventure game.

🌀 **EXAMPLE:** *Reena is a Smiling Vagabond with the edge **KEEN**, which means that she has great perception and senses. When entering a room, her player invokes **KEEN**, saying “Are Evie’s strong senses picking up anything out of the ordinary?”* 🌀

🌀 **EXAMPLE:** *Jerrak is Cruel Swordsman who is **WELL ARMED** (an Edge). In combat, Jerrak almost always has advantage when fighting because he is **WELL ARMED**.* 🌀

🌀 **EXAMPLE:** *Sultana is a Monster Slayer who is currently **TIRED**. When fighting against the vicious Scorpion Dragon, she invokes “Monster Slayer” as an edge to gain some information about the monster. Later, the Maze Controller invokes **TIRED**, when Sultana is chasing a goblin down a hallway.* 🌀

The basic **EDGE LIST** included here should account for most types of activity that will take place in a dungeon adventuring game. To keep things organized, Edges are split into 7 broad Types: Attributes, Combat, Magic, Society, 'Wises, Lineages, and Advances.

EDGES

Accurate	Magic*
Advance*	Magic Item
Animalwise	Magic Weapon
Ardent	Mastery
Armored	Mazewise
Agile	Naturewise
Beautiful	Old
Bugbear	Precise
Charming	Quiet
Cunning	Rank
Deadly	Retainers
Dexterous	Shapeshift
Familiar	Smallfolk
Fast	Streetwise
Friends*	Strong
Gearwise	Tools
Hale	Tough
Ilf	Travelled
Intimidating	Veteran
Keen	Wealth
Learned	Well-Armed
Lorewise	Young

*This edge has an additional choice to make.

ATTRIBUTES

Attributes are Edges that describe a character's abilities and strengths. Attributes are something intrinsic to the character – it's about who they are. Attributes are things like being strong or fast.



Ardent – Resolute, strong willed, and can resist pain and temptation.

Agile – Control of the body, flexibility, and balance.

Beautiful – Physically handsome and alluring.

Charming – Likable, friendly, and interesting to talk with.

Cunning – Mentally slippery, fast, strategic, and sly.

Dexterous – Deft, sleight of hand, strong hand-eye coordination.

Fast – Physically fast, fleet of foot, and quick to react.

Hale – Healthy, hearty, resistant to poisons and disease. Slow to tire. Take Advantage on all Healing saves.

Intimidating – A formidable, overawing, or threatening demeanor.

Keen – Alert, sharp eyes and ears, great senses.

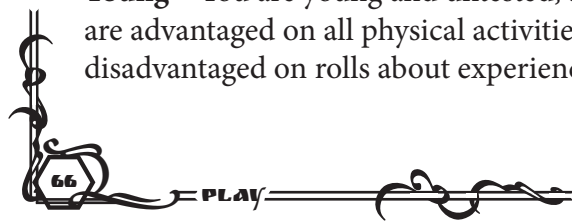
Lucky – You're naturally lucky, and things always seem to go your way. You are Advantaged on all Chaos Rolls and never take the Marked condition. Ties always break in your favor.

Quiet – Stealthy, balanced, capable of sneaking and not being seen.

Old – You are old and wise. You have seen much of life and are advantaged on all rolls about experience, history, and wisdom. You suffer disadvantage on all **BOOTS** and **BLADES** rolls to move or fight, due to your old and worn-out body.

Strong – Physically strong. Advantaged when lifting or breaking things.

Young – You are young and untested, a fresh green sprout. You are advantaged on all physical activities outside of combat, but are disadvantaged on rolls about experience, wide knowledge, and combat.



COMBAT

Combat are Edges that deal with fighting from weapons to armor — and everything in between. Anything that deals with the combat step are included here.



Accurate – Gain advantage when fighting from a distance, you are an expert marksman. Star spends on Accurate are for taking careful aim when you are calling shots – like knocking apples from children’s heads.

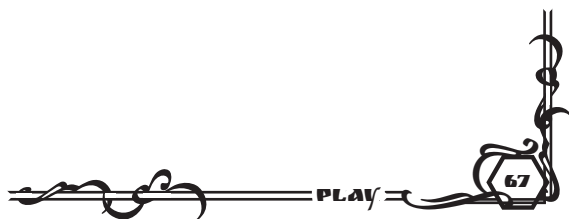
Armored – Gain advantage when resisting damage and while defending in general. You can spend Stars to negate all the damage you take from an attack – throwing your shield in the way perhaps.

Deadly – You are Advantaged when it comes to rolling **DAMAGE** – it could be because of poison, skills, magic, razor claws, burning rage, or something else.

Precise – Gain advantage when fighting in melee, you are precise and in control. Spending a Star on Precise would result in you having a very controlled and deadly strike.

Tough – Physically capable of taking a hit. Holds up against the elements. Take advantage on **DEATH’S DOOR** and **HEALING** saves.

Well-Armed – You bristle with weapons and nearly anything you touch can be used as a weapon. You can spend a star to change what you are armed with, resulting in a different bonus – a two-handed weapon (gain advantage on damage rolls), a one-handed weapon and a shield or dirk (gain advantage on defense rolls), or a single blade or paired weapons (gain advantage on attack rolls).



SOCIETY

Society are Edges that deal with interpersonal skills and your position within the world. These are things that provide station and standing, as well as wealth and power.



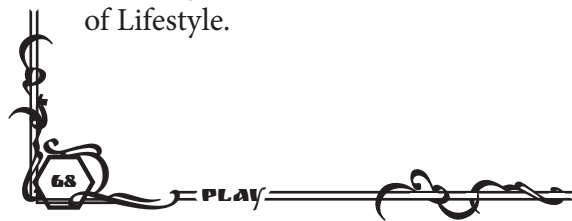
Friends – You have contacts willing to help you, or from whom you can gain knowledge or succor. Choose a type: Friends in... High Places, Low Places, Wild Places, or Dark Places. Friends can act as a source of information, “I’ve seen these marks before, while with my friends the Bugbear Tribe.” Spending a Star on Friends is like spending treasure, as it provides assistance from the Friends, or provides “prepared assistance” while you are in a Maze.

Rank – You have a title and the respect that comes with it. You are Advantaged in command situations. Choose a title like Lady, Baron, or Captain. When you throw your weight around, you can spend a Star to enforce your “law”. Having Rank increases your Lifestyle by one Tier.

Retainers – You have people that follow you, providing you with additional hands and feet on the ground. Retainers are still “the character” mechanically – meaning that you roll for them with your die – but they are separate from the character. When taking retainers, define what type of retainers they are – guards, servants, torchbearers, an apprentice, etc. You may have a few generic retainers, or one “named” retainer. Spending Stars on Retainer activity will allow them to take actions outside of the norm (like having your torchbearers map a part of the maze complex without you needing to be there).

Tools – You have specific, focused tools without spending **TREASURE**. You are assumed to have all of the tools that your Class or Edges would require at all times. When you spend a Star on Tools, you are providing a creation of your craft to complete a task.

Wealth – You have wealth beyond what you are carrying with you. Your equipment, retainers, et cetera are of the finest quality. When in situations where you would spend **TREASURE** to purchase something, roll with advantage to not lose the Treasure. With Wealth, you also gain an extra tier of Lifestyle.



WISES

‘Wises are Edges about a character’s skills and knowledge beyond their class. These are things that they are “-wise” in. This can mean a selection of related skills, advanced knowledge, or training beyond what their Class would have.



Animalwise – You can speak the language of beasts and of the wild fae creatures. While you can converse with them easily, don’t forget that animals have limited intelligence and wild beasts can still be dangerous. You can spend a Star to convince an animal to listen and complete a single command.

Gearwise – Knowledge about gears, clockwork, machines, traps, and locks. Gearwise allows for setting and disarming traps, picking locks, and other mechanical activities. Star spends for Gearwise will usually result in setting or disarming a trap, or making something work or not work, that would otherwise take a lot of time.

Learned – Well educated and intelligent. You are well read, well spoken, and have a deep understanding of the world around you.

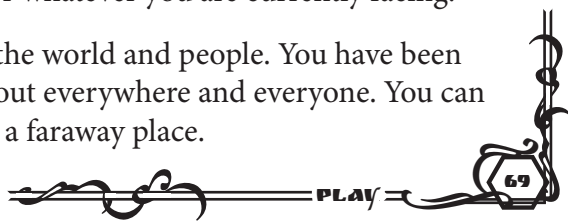
Lorewise – Knowledge about ancient and mysterious things. Myth, religion, the old world. Knowledge of unnatural monsters and ancient spells. Gain advantage when you are dealing with the strange and the unnatural. You can spend a Star to do ritual magic, or to know ancient runes, and to make up interesting details about the world.

Mazewise – You’ve been delving for a long time and are familiar with the design and history of mazes. You are skilled at handling the need for light, air, and other complexities of maze running. You are never without a torch.

Naturewise– Knowledgeable about the natural world, animals, and natural beasts. You may gain advantage in situations where you are fighting against natural things.

Streetwise– Ability to perform crime – picking pockets, forgery, con jobs, fencing, etc. Knowledge and experience on the hard streets. You gain advantage on criminal activities and can spend Stars to have already committed a crime in preparation for whatever you are currently facing.

Travelled – Wise about the ways of the world and people. You have been around and seem to know a little about everywhere and everyone. You can spend a Star to know someone from a faraway place.



LINEAGE

Lineages are Edges in the form of your culture, bloodline, or race. You gain advantages and disadvantages because of this background. Lineage is a type of edge that shows that you are something more than human. For most classes, the lineage edge will reference the name of the class (such as a **GOBLIN SNEAKTHIEF** or a **FORGOTTEN ILF**). A lineage could be more subtle – mayhaps you have the blood of dragons in your veins and that gives you Forge Magic.

As an edge, Lineage acts as a sort of second Class. Having a lineage means that you have natural abilities that are different than being “only a human”. These advantages are spelled out in your class description and are something that you can call on like you would your class – “As a forgotten ilf, I can see in the dark. Can I get advantage on this Books roll?”

There are countless types of magical lineage that you could have – races of monsters, fantasy peoples, mythical creatures. A character could be full blooded or have a distant bloodline from the past. Perhaps you were raised by wolves?

Within this book, there are 3 presented **LINEAGES** – the ilf, the bugbear, and the smallfolk.

Bugbear Lineage

Bugbears are hulking, bearlike humanoids with powerful arms and bristly fur over leather strong hide. They have massive, tusked jaws, and in some ways look like their diminutive cousins the kobold only much larger. Bugbears have coal black eyes that can see in the dark. They have small nostrils but no real nose yet have a sensitive sense of smell. Their broad faces are set off with large, furry, pointed ears.

Humans tend to think that bugbears are uncivilized and primitive – bugbears tend not to think about humans at all (seeing them as physically weak and easy to kill). Culturally, bugbears are stoic and isolationist. They tend to isolate themselves into forts and warrens, often taken from a weaker tribe. They can be very bellicose, and given a powerful leader, they will make war until they feel they have gained all the land they can control.

Bugbears that leave the clan are seen as aberrant by their fellows – as bugbears tend to be very conservative. Conversely, bugbears honor strength and wisdom – so anyone that shows these traits is welcome in their domains.

Ilf Lineage

Ilves are remnants of the once mighty Elf Nations that dominated the world in earlier times. The Elves were potent and powerful wizards – and they lived for hundreds, sometimes thousands of years. Their dominion was brought to end during an ancient war – they fought amongst themselves with world scarring magic, ancient dragons, and unchecked demons. Many of the Elves left before this final conflagration, the few that remained would become the Ilves.

Ilves are taller than humans, thin and sharp. They have pale skin, large, pointed ears, and fine features – including oddly-jointed fingers. They have deep set eyes and tend to wear their fine hair long. Culturally, Ilves are loners and wanderers – forming councils when they gather, but for the most part, travelling alone or with a partner.

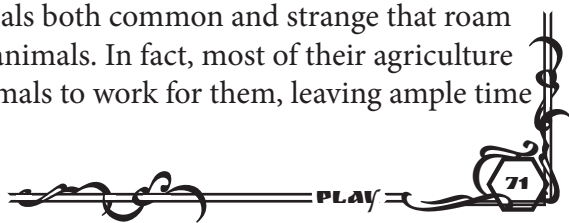
Each ilf lineage is touched by one of the five elemental domains – forge, night, sea, sky, or earth. This elemental nature is visible in the colors of their eyes, as well as the color they tend to dye their long hair, and favor in cloaks and jewels. This elemental nature allows them to produce mundane magical effects, and even cast minor spells of their domain. The largest influence is in their ability to sense their blood element.

Smallfolk Lineage

Smallfolk may look like stout human children, but they are not. They are their own proud race – with old traditions, and a deep love of family and community. They stand just over a yard high, with barrel chests and rosy cheeks. They tend to wear their hair curly and beards long. Their short arms, stout legs, and potbellies belie their dexterous fingers.

The Smallfolk garb themselves in comfortable clothing, preferring soft and supple materials. Their traditional attire features breeches or skirts, paired with tunics and vests. They favor spots of bright color (such scarves or pocket kerchiefs). Smallfolk often wear or carry trinkets, oddments, and adornments to spare but usually only display a small portion of their accoutrement at a time – being known as great hoarders of shiny wealth. Elders in the community wear pointed hats of various colors to show their rank within the village. Vagabond and gadabout Smallfolk are the only ‘Folken that don’t care deeply about their hats.

The Smallfolk are tuned to the natural world around them, and more so than most have a special connection with the animals both common and strange that roam the wilds. All Smallfolk can speak with animals. In fact, most of their agriculture and trading revolves around getting animals to work for them, leaving ample time for food, songs, and ale.



MAGIC

Magic details the Edges that are about “Magical Power”. Magic Edges provide not only options for characters to gain **ADVANTAGE**, but they also give a character access to “magic” as a fiction for their actions. When taking a **MAGIC EDGE**, you must also choose a **DOMAIN**: Night, Forge, Sea, Sky, or Earth. This domain provides a framework for your magical ability and defines its “corners.”



Familiar – You have a magical retainer. It can be a wizard’s familiar, a druid’s totem, a warlock’s demon, or a ranger’s animal companion. Choose a domain for it. It acts as an extension of you like a retainer, but it is a **NON-PERSON** with a deep magical bond to you. Unlike regular retainers, a Familiar is bound to you and a part of you. Spending Stars on a Familiar action allows them to do complex and independent things.

Magic – You use magic. You cast spells or channel magical forces. Define what kind of magic you wield – arcane spells, runic knowledge, ancient rituals, prayers to gods, pacts with demons, etc. When selecting this edge, choose either a **DOMAIN** or a **SCHOOL**. Minor effects from your **DOMAIN** or **SCHOOL** are simple actions that you can perform on a roll (see Mundane Magic on page 119). Things that affect other people or are more serious in effect require spending a Star.

Magic Item – You have an item (like a magic mirror or a magical figurine) or a class of expendable items (like potions) that is powerful and provides you Advantage in specific types of situations. It could be anything as long as it is A) specific (like a Cloak of Invisibility), B) obtainable (you can’t have Mjolnir), and C) is allowed by the **MC**. Magic Items are a great Edge to add to a character as a reward. Basically, any Magic Item from any traditional fantasy **RPG** is fair play. In most ways Magic Item functions like Magic Spells but with a different, more specific fiction. Magic Spells often have flexibility, where items are specific usage (though better at it).

Magic Weapon – You have a magical weapon. It acts in many ways like **WELL ARMED** (giving you Advantage in many combat situations), but it is a single weapon (unlike Well Armed). Your weapon isn’t just a “magic sword” it should have a name and a story – You have “Baldur’s Bane, an axe that grows cold in the presence of dwarven ruins and was forged by a giant to slay the dwarf king.” Spending a Star will allow the weapon to do amazing things.

Shapeshift – You have the ability to turn into another form, usually animal shapes. When you transform, your clothing and gear change with you. While you are in an animal shape– you still remain yourself in mind and personality, but you lose access to your other Edges and your Class. Changing into an animal shape takes a Star Spend but reverting to human happens at will or whenever you take a Condition. While you are in an animal form, your **DIE** changes – d4 for birds, d6 for most small mammals and the like, d8 for predators, and d10 for large animals.

ADVANCES

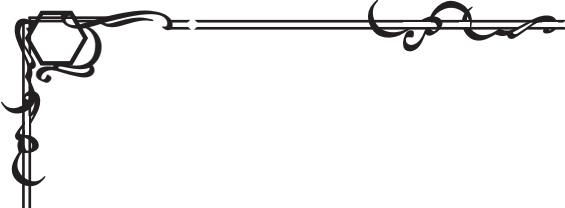
Advances are how characters can get better over time. While **MAZES** was originally designed for iconic characters that don't “evolve” or “level up” – over time, some characters we may see many times may change. In these situations, Advances are special Edges that provide specific functions based on a character gaining power or age. Advances are usually not available to starting characters (though there are always exceptions).



***Advance Edge** – When a character gains an **ADVANCE**, they may choose any edge from the following list. This represents the character learning a new skill, gaining a new ability, finding new equipment, or gaining in social power. Advance list: Accurate, Animalwise, Ardent, Armored, Agile, Deadly, Dexterous, Familiar, Fast, Friends, Gearwise, Hale, Intimidating, Learned, Lorewise, Magic, Magic Item, Magic Weapon, Mastery, Mazewise, Naturewise, Old, Precise, Quiet, Rank, Retainers, Shapeshift, Streetwise, Strong, Tools, Tough, Travelled, Veteran, Wealth, Well Armed.

Mastery – Mastery is a rare trait. Mastering an edge means that you treat a **CROWN** roll as a **KEY** roll for the specific thing you have Mastered (a class or an edge – such as **MASTER NATUREWISE** or **MASTER ASSASSIN**). You cannot start play with a **MASTERY** edge and can only take **MASTERY** as an advance.

Veteran – You are a Veteran adventurer and are well prepared for the road ahead. If you would take a condition (any condition), you may instead “take Veteran.” As a Veteran, you have seen worse, and you shake it off. Effectively, Veteran gives you a free refresh or condition test.



interlude

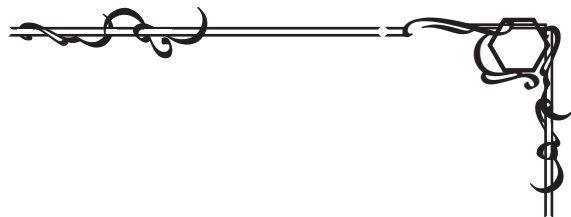
It had been a long and difficult delve. The crypt was a maze of corridors, one passage looping back upon another, and Rose had feared they were lost. But Lux soon set them straight, though she still did not trust the thief. They'd signed the contract together with the necromancer, yes. But Lux hid his face with a black silk scarf even down here, where none but rats and the bones of the dead would mark him. Rose wondered—what had Lux done to warrant such vigilance?

The door, when they found it, was marked by Pydaig's Tooth, just as the necromancer had said. Rose tried the handle, shoving brutishly, but the lock held strong. When she turned to face Lux, she could tell by his eyes that he was smiling. The thief's lockpicks materialized from within his cloak.

"Don't touch anything inside," Rose said. Bargle had explained that the spirit of the ancient Ilf King would be quite protective of its treasure. "The necromancer will pay us handsomely when we return with the reagent he needs."

Lux shrugged and pushed the door open, slipping into the dark interior ahead of Rose. Brandishing her torch, Rose illuminated the tomb. The bodies of the king's atriarch and chief retainer lay amidst his burial treasure, bones darkened by the same dust coating the urns and gems. A pointless display of power. Rose shook her head. Beyond, the king's body rested in a gilded box, again marked by a rendition of Pydaig, the Ruby Wyrm who, legends told, had been the Ilf King's conqueror.

"By dragons ancient and terrible," Rose began, speaking the words the necromancer had taught her. The spell broke dark across her tongue. The cover of the stone coffin began to rumble, dust cascading to the floor as the thick panel slid aside.



A figure rose from within, eyes glowing ghost-blue as it faced Rose.

“I was Vulthoom D’avalur, Witch King of Talyra,” rasped the creature. A bony finger rose as the once-king pointed up at the wall above its coffin. In the flicker of her crackling torch, Rose saw a depiction of the Ilf ruler, the dragon Pydaig winging in on clouds behind. Vulthoom asked, “Who raises me from slumber?”

“It is I,” Rose began, but the undead king turned from her, hissing, “You are not alone.”

“It is true, I had help in finding you,” Rose said, trying to remain calm. She continued quickly: “I come bearing a request from the great sorcerer Bargle the Black.”

But the king was rising, his ancient bones aglow now with that same ice-blue spirit light. The skeleton’s voice shouted, “Covetous one, show yourself, or face my hordes. You dare test my rage by stealing from my riches again?”

Rose blinked. Again?

Behind her came scraping sounds, bones shaking themselves to life. A cacophony of spirit voices hissed the wordless seething of undying power lust.

“Lux,” Rose shouted, drawing her blade. “Get out here and fight, damn it, or I’ll end you myself.”



being rules for creating characters to explore
an exciting world of swords & sorcery



~ Part Two ~

ON CREATING A CHARACTER



ON CREATING A CHARACTER

“Life’s a maze. We all come in the same way, and there’s many routes and many exits.”

- Kieron Gillen, *Die*

CREATING AND PLAYING A CHARACTER

At the heart of all roleplaying is the concept of “the character”. The character is your avatar in the fantasy world. The real magic in fantasy roleplaying is putting yourself in the boots of these imaginary characters and “living” the adventure.

HOW DO I CREATE A MAZE CHARACTER?

To create a new character, you will answer a series of questions as that character. Each question provides answers that you will then record on your character sheet.

WHY DO I WANT TO ENTER THE MAZE?

The answer selects your Role, which in turn defines your Roll, your Hearts, and your Stars.

HOW DO I SOLVE PROBLEMS?

The answer defines your Aspect.

WHAT IS MY PLACE IN THIS WORLD?

The answer is your Class, which determines your first Edge.

WHO AM I IN THIS WORLD?

Choose one of two options for your second Edge.

WHAT IS MY BEST ATTRIBUTE?

Choose one of three options for your third Edge.

WHAT DO I LOOK LIKE?

Define your appearance or select from the options with your class.

WHAT IS MY NAME?

Introduce yourself to the rest of the party.

WHY DO I WANT TO ENTER THE MAZE?

Your **ROLE** defines the types of actions that you want to do in the game, and your **ROLL** determines which actions you are best suited to accomplishing. Choose your answer to the question, and then record your **ROLE**, **ROLL**, **HEARTS**, and **STARS** on your Character Sheet.

“...BECAUSE, I AM A SEEKER OF KNOWLEDGE AND GLORY.”



Your **ROLE** is the **PARAGON**. Seize the d4, Paragon! This is your die. You are the best at what you do. Your **ROLL** is the d4. You have 4 Hearts and 4 Stars.

“...BECAUSE, I WANT TO STAY IN THE HEAT OF THE ACTION.”



Your **ROLE** is the **VANGUARD**. Snatch up the d6, Vanguard! This is your die. You always take the first step into danger. Your **ROLL** is the d6. You have 6 Hearts and 3 Stars.

“...BECAUSE, I AM HERE TO FIGHT! I HIT IT WITH MY SWORD.”



Your **ROLE** is the **FIGHTER**. Take up the d8, Fighter! This is your die. You are the sword against the darkness. Your **ROLL** is the d8. You have 8 Hearts and 2 Stars.

“...BECAUSE, SOMEONE NEEDS TO KEEP EVERYONE SAFE.”



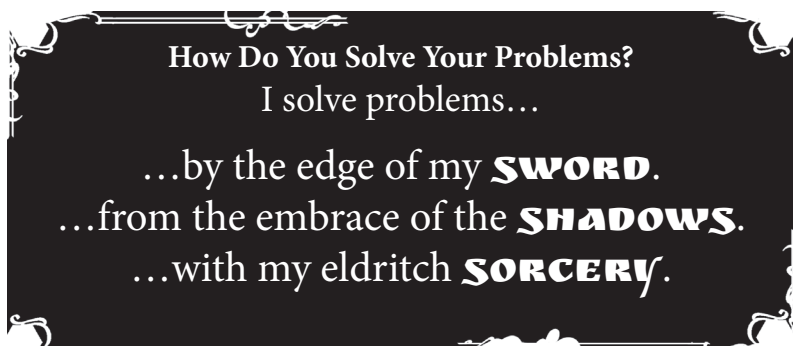
Your **ROLE** is the **SENTINEL**. The d10 awaits you, **SENTINEL**! This is your die. You are the strong shield of the party. Your **ROLL** is the d10. You have 10 Hearts and 1 Star.

Once you have selected a Character Class, each class will also list some potential **DRIVES** that your character may have. These are ideas on “why” your character is taking on this dangerous lifestyle. There is no “mechanical” action associated with Drives, they are here as narrative pointers to inspire your character.

HOW DO I SOLVE PROBLEMS?

The answer will define your Aspect. Depending on how you answer this question, you should have a broad idea of what kind of character you are. Your Aspect determines the options you have for Class as well as defines how you spend your **STARS**. Your Class defines what you do best, and the types of actions that you want to do in the game.

Record your **ASPECT** on your character sheet.



WHAT IS MY PLACE IN THIS WORLD?

The answer is your Class, which determines your first Edge. Turn to the list for your chosen Aspect, and choose which Class best represents your idea of the character. Depending on which Class you choose, will determine your options for the next few questions as well. To start, record the **CLASS** on your character sheet, and also record the first **EDGE** (which is written as: "**THE [CLASS] IS ALWAYS [EDGE]**".)

Advanced players may choose to create classes from whole cloth, choosing a character concept (the class) and deciding on three edges.

SWORD CLASSES	SHADOW CLASSES	SORCERY CLASSES
Dangerous Bravo Jaded Sellsword Knockabout Ranger Monster Slayer Outcast Bugbear Reluctant Hero Savage Barbarian Valiant Dragoon	Adventurous Smallfolk Cursed Tomb Robber Excellent Vagabond Filthy Urchin Nighthawk Assassin Puzzling Locksmith Talented Thief Zealous Cultist	Blazing Magician Guild Mage Haunted Librarian Infernal Summoner Last Ilf Quack Alchemist Underground Druid Wise Witch
		

WHO am I IN THIS WORLD?

Each Class presents two options – the core styles of that class. Choose one of these options and record that as your second Edge.

Each Class offers a choice between two different “poles” for a character – are you aggressive or defensive; do you use magic spells or magic items; do you have refined skills or useful henchmen? This choice is posed in the form of a question.

WHAT is my BEST ATTRIBUTE?

Choose one of the three listed options, and record that as your third Edge.

What is your best attribute? What is it that people see in you and remark on– are you fast, or cunning, or friendly? Each Class offers a choice of three different “attributes.” These edges are the most common “attributes” associated with a character of your type. Your best attribute will tell you a lot about how you are going to be the most successful in the maze, because leaning into your best attributes is the easiest way to succeed at rolls.

WHAT do I LOOK LIKE?

Define your appearance or select from the options with your class. You can record these on your character sheet, or summarize them for the other players. Unlike every other step in character creation up to this point, these choices are entirely up to you. Determine what you look like. Each **CLASS** offers ideas, but you are free to determine this any way that you like.

If you have been playing **RPGs** for a long time – **MAZES** isn't like your traditional **FANTASY RPG** – there is no “shopping trip” coming up. If you want your character to be wearing a rich ermine cloak, or a shining suit of knight's armor, they are. If you want to have red hair or purple skin or be from a strange town, it's up to you.

Each character class also includes a **KIT**, which should give you some idea about the clothing, gear, and style of your character. Remember, in Mazes, these details are purely aesthetic – so feel free to get creative and weird.

WHAT is my NAME?

Create a name for yourself or choose one of the list of suggestions listed with each Character Class. Introduce yourself to the rest of the party. Prepare yourself for the adventure of a lifetime.

ICONIC HEROES VERSUS DRAMATIC CHARACTERS

Unlike many other dungeon crawling and exploration style roleplaying games, **MAZES** is **NOT** focused on a long-term character development. You are not grinding out experience to gain levels of power. If you choose to play with the same character over a long period of time, we will see that character grow and change – but that growth is not the primary motivator.

The original sword & sorcery fiction that drove early fantasy roleplaying games were tales of iconic (versus dramatic) heroes. Dramatic heroes experience an event, and then resolve a character arc – being changed by the event for good or ill. An iconic character comes to an event and imposes their ethos on it – setting things right with their abilities and selfhood.

We don't see those characters “level up” over time. In fact, most authors told stories at different points in the character's life, without much difference in their abilities from book to book. Then a strange thing happened – the “source material” for roleplaying game characters, became stories that were actually based on role-playing games themselves.

Characters in *Mazes* follow this iconic path, in that characters won't change (much) over time. They don't have to have “character arcs” or dramatic ends. *Mazes* characters are interesting because of who they are, not who they are becoming.

In *Mazes*, you are encouraged to create lots of characters. Fill your imaginary tavern with interesting folks that can be called on for specific jobs. Characters may only exist for a story. Characters may come and go because each character is effective and interesting on their own merits.

CHARACTER SHEETS

Each player needs a Character Sheet– a record of your character that tracks your pertinent info, your role; your aspect, class, and edges – as well as your current Hearts, Stars, and Wealth; and whatever conditions you are suffering from. As a group, a party also have a Party Sheet or other markers that does the same, but it tracks the party’s Treasure, and the current level of Darkness.

Polymorph has been designed for the modern audience, even if **MAZES** acts like it was created in 1979. Your character can be expressed in multiple ways – but the most common will be handwritten in a notebook, on a copied or printed character sheet, or even via cards. Are all valid. While the Mazes project will focus on handwritten and printed character sheets, premium cards will be available for everything in the game at some point, as well as a playable setup for playing online using Roll20 and other virtual tabletops.

You can download Character and Party Sheets at 9thLevel.com/resources

NAME

ASPECT

EDGES

WEALTH

CONDITIONS

STRESSED

TIED

HURT

MARKED

THE FIGHTER CLASS

1 KEY

23 BOOKS

345 BOOTS

4567 BLADES

56789 BONES

8 CROWN

VENTURER'S JOURNAL

MAZES

NAME

ASPECT

EDGES

WEALTH

CONDITIONS

STRESSED

TIED

HURT

MARKED

THE PARAGON CLASS

1 KEY

23 BOOKS

345 BOOTS

4567 BLADES

56789 BONES

4 CROWN

VENTURER'S JOURNAL

MAZES

NAME

ASPECT

EDGES

WEALTH

CONDITIONS

STRESSED

TIED

HURT

MARKED

THE VANGUARD CLASS

1 KEY

23 BOOKS

345 BOOTS

4567 BLADES

56789 BONES

6 CROWN

VENTURER'S JOURNAL

MAZES

NAME

ASPECT

EDGES

WEALTH

CONDITIONS

STRESSED

TIED

HURT

MARKED

THE SENTINEL CLASS

1 KEY

23 BOOKS

345 BOOTS

4567 BLADES

56789 BONES

10 CROWN

VENTURER'S JOURNAL

MAZES

SWORD

THE DANGEROUS BRAVO

The Dangerous Bravo is always **PRECISE**.

As a dangerous fighter, are you **AGILE** or **ACCURATE**?

Are you **HALE**, **FAST**, or **STRONG**?

THE JADED SELLSWORD

The Jaded Sellsword is always **WELL ARMED**.

As a mercenary soldier, do you have **RANK** or are you **WEALTHY**?

Are you **LUCKY**, **VETERAN**, or have Sworn Swords (**RETAINERS**)?

THE KNOCKABOUT RANGER

The Knockabout Ranger is always **ACCURATE**.

As a road-weary archer, are you **TRAVELLED** or **QUIET**?

Are you **NATUREWISE**, **TOUGH**, or do you have a Beast (**FAMILIAR**)?

THE MONSTER SLAYER

A Monster Slayer is always **WELL ARMED**.

As a hunter of vicious monsters, are you **MAZEWISE** or

do you have a Pack of Loyal Hounds (**RETAINERS**)?

Are you **CUNNING**, **DEXTEROUS**, or **STRONG**?

THE OUTCAST BUGBEAR

The Outcast Bugbear is always of the **BUGBEAR LINEAGE**.

As a lone monster, are you **DEADLY** or **ARMORED**?

Are you **STRONG**, **TOUGH**, or **TRAVELLED**?

THE RELUCTANT HERO

The Reluctant Hero is always **YOUNG**.

As the chosen one, do you have a **MAGIC WEAPON** or a **MAGIC ITEM**?

Do others say that you are **BEAUTIFUL**, **CHARMING**, or **LUCKY**?

THE SAVAGE BARBARIAN

The Savage Barbarian is always **TOUGH**.

As a lone hero, are you **DEADLY** or **STRONG**?

Are you **ARDENT**, **HALE**, or **NATUREWISE**?

THE VALIANT DRAGOON

The Valiant Dragoon is always **ARMORED**.

As a heavily armored soldier, are you **DEADLY** or

do you have Shieldbearers (**RETAINERS**)?

Are you **ARDENT**, **STRONG**, or **INTIMIDATING**?

SHADOW

THE ADVENTUROUS SMALLFOLK

The Adventurous Smallfolk is always of the **SMALLFOLK LINEAGE**.

As a small and stout adventurer, are you **ANIMALWISE** or a **SHAPESHIFTER**?

Are you **CHARMING**, **QUIET**, or do you have **FRIENDS**?

THE CURSED TOMB ROBBER

The Tomb Robber is always **MAZEWISE**.

As a crypt explorer, are you **GEARWISE** or have Torchbearers (**RETAINERS**)?

Are you **CUNNING**, **DEXTEROUS**, or **KEEN**?

THE EXCELLENT VAGABOND

The Excellent Vagabond is always **TRAVELLED**.

As a wandering jack, are you **CHARMING** or **CUNNING**?

Are you **FAST**, **LUCKY**, or do you have **FRIENDS**?

THE FILTHY URCHIN

The Filthy Urchin is always **QUIET**.

As a penniless beggar, are you **STREETWISE** or **DEXTEROUS**?

Are you **AGILE**, **FAST**, or **KEEN**?

THE NIGHTHAWK ASSASSIN

The Nighthawk Assassin is always **DEADLY**.

As a hard killer, are you **ACCURATE** or **QUIET**?

Are you **AGILE**, **FAST**, or **KEEN**?

THE PUZZLING LOCKSMITH

The Puzzling Locksmith is always **GEARWISE**.

As a door cracker and riddler, are you carrying **TOOLS** or are you **LEARNED**?

Are you **STREETWISE**, **KEEN**, or **QUIET**?

THE TALENTED THIEF

The Talented Thief is always **STREETWISE**.

As a scofflaw and a footpad, are you **ACCURATE** or **QUIET**?

Are you **AGILE**, **CHARMING**, or **KEEN**?

THE ZEALOUS CULTIST

The Zealous Cultist is always **LOREWISE**.

As a seeker of dark knowledge, do you have Mad Followers (**RETAINERS**) or a dark **FAMILIAR**?

Are you **INTIMIDATING**, **OLD**, or do you have **RANK**?

SORCERY

THE BLAZING MAGICIAN

The Blazing Magician always knows **MAGIC**.

As a channeler of raw power, are you **ACCURATE** or **ARMORED**?

Are you **ARDENT**, **STRONG**, or **TOUGH**?

THE GUILD MAGE

The Guild Mage always knows **MAGIC**.

As an arcane conjuror, do you have a trusty **FAMILIAR** or a powerful **MAGIC ITEM**?

Are you **LEARNED**, **TRAVELLED**, or **NATUREWISE**?

THE HAUNTED LIBRARIAN

The Haunted Librarian is always **LOREWISE**.

As a seeker of dark secrets, do you practice Forbidden Magic (**MAGIC**) or have an Accursed Relic (**MAGIC ITEM**)?

Are you **INTIMIDATING**, **KEEN**, or **WEALTHY**?

THE INFERNAL SUMMONER

The Infernal Summoner always knows **MAGIC (SUMMONING)**.

As a diabolist, are you **LOREWISE** or do you have a **FAMILIAR**?

Are you **ARDENT**, **BEAUTIFUL**, or **LEARNED**?

THE LAST ILF

The Last Ilf always has the **ILF LINEAGE**.

As one of the forgotten, do you practice **MAGIC**, or do you carry a **MAGIC WEAPON**?

Are you **BEAUTIFUL**, **CUNNING**, or **QUIET**?

THE QUACK ALCHEMIST

The Quack Alchemist always has Potions (**MAGIC ITEM**).

As a charlatan and snake oil seller, are you **LOREWISE** or **NATUREWISE**?

Are you **DEXTEROUS**, **KEEN**, or **LEARNED**?

THE UNDERGROUND DRUID

The Underground Druid can always **SHAPESHIFT**.

As a servant of the underground world, are you **NATUREWISE** or **MAZEWISE**?

Are you **STRONG**, **KEEN**, or **DEADLY**?

THE WISE WITCH

The Wise Witch always knows **MAGIC**.

As a soothsayer, are you **LOREWISE** or **NATUREWISE**?

Are you **CUNNING**, **LEARNED**, or do you have a **FAMILIAR**?

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THE ADVENTUROUS SMALLFOLK

The Adventurous Smallfolk is always of the **SMALLFOLK LINEAGE**.

As a small and stout adventurer, are you **ANIMALWISE** or a **SHAPESHIFTER**?

Are you **CHARMING**, **QUIET**, or do you have **FRIENDS**?



The Smallfolken aren't just low to the ground, they are close to the earth physically and metaphorically– a member of a small but proud people that tends to live near (but not too near) human settlements. They stand about a yard high, with thick barrel chests and rosy cheeks. The Adventurous Smallfolk garbs themselves in comfortable clothing, preferring soft and supple materials. Traditional attire features breeches or skirts, paired with tunics and vests. Many smallfolk tend to wear their hair curly and beards long.

While most Smallfolken will never leave their village, a few possess a boundless enthusiasm for experiencing the world beyond the palisades and village walls. Since only adventuresome Smallfolk end up on adventures they tend to be of a similar disposition– full of endless curiosity and cleverness, willing to tackle both harrowing dangers and unsolvable riddles with equal joy. They are resourceful and irrepressible in the face of danger. Owing to their small size, Adventurous Smallfolk are often quite adept at being Quiet – making themselves neither seen nor heard. Combined with their penchant for shiny things, those few smallfolk that are not farmers are often assumed to be thieves, robbers, or at best vagabonds. The natural likeability and openness of an Adventurous Smallfolk often leads them to making Friends everywhere. While all Smallfolk can speak to animals, your connection to the world is deeper and stranger. You can either transform into animals or befriend even the deadliest.

RECRUITING

Recruit a Smallfolk into your party when you want a companion unfazed by the prospect of danger and ready with a broad smile.

DRIVE

To explore the world outside of their little village.
To gather enough loot to buy a palatial Farmhouse.
To find the Flickering Egg of a Phosphorous Drake.

NAMES

Honey, Shovel, Humbolt, Scratcher, Ken, Braeburn, Siobhan, Holestein, Jonagold, Winesap, Donkey, Sheila, Modo, Cavanuagh

KIT

Leather vest, a pair of daggers, backpack, bedroll, carved pipe, wine

THE BLAZING MAGICIAN

The Blazing Magician always knows **MAGIC** *.

As a channeler of raw power, are you **ACCURATE** or **ARMORED**?

Are you **ARDENT**, **STRONG**, or **TOUGH**?



*Choose a **DOMAIN** or a **SCHOOL** of **MAGIC**, usually Forge or Evocation.

Not all sorcerers are bookish scholars with their noses deep in ancient tomes. Some mages are firebrands – evokers and conjurors of raw power. These blazing magicians are feared on the battlefield and in the maze alike. A Blazing Magician throws fireballs and asks questions later, focusing their talents on either being deadly accurate from afar – with lightning bolts and magic missiles, or unassailable on the front line with earth and force shields.

Blazing Magicians tend to wear heavy tunics over trousers with stout boots. They are energy casters, not sages. Most wear traveling cloaks, usually bedecked with foul sigils and fierce runes to strike fear into their enemies' hearts.

The Blazer will often adopt a focus for their casting – an orb, rod, wand, or staff. These foci allow the mage to control their magic easier – and prevent scorching and burning the flesh of their hands when something goes wrong.

RECRUITING

Recruit a Blazing Mage into your party for firepower – literally. Great fighters with magical upside.

DRIVES

To obtain personal power and wealth.

To find focus and discipline in their martial ways.

To hunt down and stop Bargle the Black.

NAMES

Icwind, Ixidior, Vance, Folsom, Rachael the Canny, Stormbinder, Hexen, Rebezza, Salome, Burn

KIT

Heavy cloak, jewel-tipped wand, dagger, pouches of strange powders, wineskin, crystal goggles

THE CURSED TOMB-ROBBER

The Cursed Tomb Robber is always MAZEWISE.

As a crypt explorer, are you GEARWISE or do you have Torchbearers (RETAINERS)?

Are you CUNNING, DEXTEROUS, or KEEN?



Most Tomb Robbers prefer to be called Explorers, or “Acquisitionists” – but at the end of the day, their field of expertise is stealing from mazes and dungeons. All Tomb Robbers are experts in navigating ruins and tombs. Many are adept at lock picking, traps, and complex mechanisms. Some Robbers are more like antiquarians, reveling in ancient lore and forgotten languages. Others prefer to bring along some burly youths to carry torches into the depths and hopefully carry out chests of loot.

Tomb Robbers tend to be either peacocks or wallflowers, and their gear reflects their styles. Show-off robbers will wear fine dresses and smart cut tunics and hats, drink fine spirits, and tend to have elaborate hair and over the top styles. More sedate robbers will wear leather armor with pockets, and make sure that all the oils and tools in their packs are carefully marked.

RECRUITING

Recruit a Robber into your Party to find secret doors, handle locked chests, and disarm trapped floors.

DRIVES

To unearth a legendary artifact.

To solve an ancient mystery or prophecy.

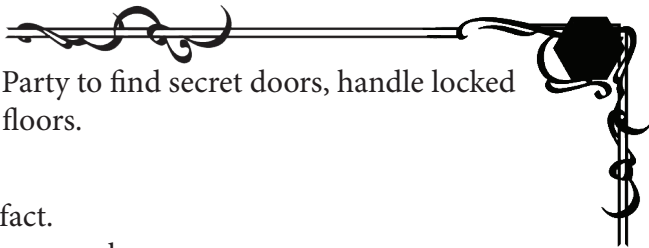
To lift the Curse laid upon them by the mummy Uldextra-Cha.

NAMES

Esi, Spenser, Olivia, Eddard the Silent, Jax, Ollivander, Chaz, Wight, Deep Tom, Red, Shiro

KIT

Ancient Dress Uniform of a forgotten kingdom, toolbelt, tooled leather vest, brass lantern on a pole, silken cord, whip, shortsword, lockpicks



THE DANGEROUS BRAVO

The Dangerous Bravo is always **PRECISE**.

As a very serious fighter, are you **AGILE** or **ACCURATE**?

Are you **HALE**, **FAST**, or **STRONG**?



The Dangerous Bravo is a feared fighter. Bravos can find work anywhere and are favored by all dungeon and maze explorers as the best front line of defense. Bravos are in it for the money, usually. Bravos are focused on fighting, and little else. Most wear colorful silks to catch the eye – advertising their sharp blades and their lack of fear.

The Bravo is a solo fighter. A student of the blade, a master of many fighting styles. Generally proficient in most weapons, but specializing in one, the Dangerous Bravo is a sight to behold on the battlefield. Most tend to favor strange or exotic weapons – giant scimitars, wicked halberds, pennoned lances, spiked chains, or the like. Some are more sedate and favor a well-cared for longsword or broadsword.

RECRUITING

Recruit a Bravo into your Party to take point in the melee to come.

DRIVES

To drive their foes before them and hear their lamentations.

To prove they are master fighters.

To defeat Zhayne the Sword Saint in a duel.

NAMES

James, Jarvis, Peng, Helen, Kreer, Red-Eye, Fergie, Blacksnake,

Wanda the Knife, Geodore, Rithisak, Dziko

KIT

Cotton tunic, chainmail vest, silk scarves, paired curved scimitars, hand crossbow, battered backpack and bedroll



THE **EXCELLENT VAGABOND**

The Excellent Vagabond is always **TRAVELLED**.

As a wandering jack, are you **CHARMING** or **CUNNING**?

Are you **FAST**, **LUCKY**, or do you have **FRIENDS**?



The Excellent Vagabond has seen more of the world than most. They tend to be polyglots, speaking a lot of languages. They also wear outfits cobbled together from the favored garb of the many places that they have visited. As they are constantly on the move, Vagabonds prefer jewelry to coin. It's better to wear your fortune than lose it! Vagabonds tend to eschew armor, in favor of layers of finery that are easy to wear and easy to lose. Heavy coats (for cold nights in the wild) over cast-off tunics and silks, being the most common. As the Excellent Vagabond has been most everywhere, they tend not to notice if someone's looks are uncommon, or that their own looks can be outlandish. Vagabonds love a good dagger or any other weapon that they can conceal. Knives are common, as are bludgeons of all kinds.

Vagabonds are looking for the easy life or have an itch for travel that they can't contain. They can be great fighters and genial companions; but most are just trying to survive another day. Vagabonds tend to collect Friends and Enemies in most places where they spend any time.

RECRUITING

Recruit a Vagabond into your Party if you need a guide to the strange and unusual; they've already been there, done that, and killed them anyway.

DRIVES

Nothing really, just passing through.

One more adventure, and then I'll settle down.

Ensure that no one collects the sizable bounty on their head for The Gelatinous Incident.

NAMES

King, Osamu, Grace, Pulliver, Dromas, Stella Star, Freja, Ghee Who Walks Slowly

KIT

Heavy coat (stolen), silk finery (patched and stained), slouch boots (tailored), a cursed amulet (fake), a heavy sack (waiting to be filled), and a collection of small coins from many cities

THE FILTHY URCHIN

The Filthy Urchin is always **QUIET**.

As a penniless beggar, are you **STREETWISE** or **YOUNG**?

Are you **AGILE**, **FAST**, or **KEEN**?



Orphans, by-blows, and assorted ragamuffins can be found in any port, dock, poor quarter, or the like. Young beggars hide in every tarnished, ugly, and ram-shackle place. The Filthy Urchin is used to hiding in the dark corners of ships, taverns, and alleys. The most daring take up the dangerous life of venturing, either through coercion, desperation, or (most likely) ignorance.

Survival as a beggar often comes down to luck. Were you just lucky enough to escape the slums with your skin intact? Others know that the only luck you get in this world is the luck that you make yourself, because if you were actually lucky, you wouldn't be a beggar.

RECRUITING

Recruit a Filthy Urchin into your party when you need someone small, nimble, sneaky, inexpensive, and expendable.

DRIVES

To escape a life of poverty and despair.

To steal a jewel the size of their fist.

To find and free Sky, their childhood friend sold into slavery.

NAMES

Tim, Sol, Kitty, Amos, Annette, Fair Jane, Crooked, Juniper, White Cow, Boy

KIT

Filthy rags, a wicked shiv, a stolen backpack, a hidden purse, a lantern that some guy just handed to you



THE GUILD MAGE

The Guild Mage always knows **MAGIC***.

As an arcanist, do you have a trusty **FAMILIAR** or a powerful **MAGIC ITEM**?

Are you **LEARNED**, **TRAVELLED**, or **NATUREWISE**?



You must select a **DOMAIN (Forge, Earth, Night, Sky, Sea)*

Elemental sorcerers, Guild Mages focus on a single domain of magic – but hope to master all of its secrets. Far more common than other wizards, Mages have a more intuitive connection to the Domains (and rarely bother to discuss magic in terms of schools). Each domain has a separate type of mage – with its own name and focus. Most mages carry both a wand and staff adorned with symbols of their domain. Some gain assistances in the form of a familiar (generally an animal associated with their domain, or an elemental spirit). Others tend to focus on using powerful Magic Items, generally of their own creation.

When a mage feels that they have mastered their domain, they find a practitioner of their art to test them and induct them into the Invisible College – passing on to them the rights and privileges of the name. After this acceptance, they may furnish themselves with a robe or tunic and pants in the color of their domain, which is why they are often called by the color of their domain; being known simply as a Black Mage, for instance. Necromancers or Black Mages have mastered the Night Domain. Geomancers or Green Mages have mastered the Earth Domain. Aeromancers or White Mages have mastered the Sky Domain. Hydromancers or Blue Mages have mastered the Sea Domain. Pyromancers or Red Mages have mastered the Forge Domain.

RECRUITING

Recruit a: Necromancer to speak with dead and command their attention; a Geomancer to speak with beasts and travel the secret byways of the earth; a Hydromancer when you need an ally that can stand calm in the eye of the storm; an Aeromancer if you need air support and a fast responder; or a Pyromancer for shock and awe.

NAMES

Madzimoyo, Nianzu, Marcos, Morianne, Skye the Enchanter

KIT

Colorful robes embroidered with symbols, an iconic staff, a light backpack, a few small books, good boots, small tools and measuring equipment

THE HAUNTED LIBRARIAN

The Haunted Librarian is always **LOREWISE**.

As a seeker of dark secrets, do you practice forbidden **MAGIC*** or have an Accursed Relic (**MAGIC ITEM**)?

Are you **INTIMIDATING**, **KEEN**, or **WEALTHY**?



Choose a **DOMAIN or a **SCHOOL** of **MAGIC**. Haunted Librarians are most often students of **ILLUMINATION**, **ENCHANTMENT**, or **NIGHT** Magic.*

As a Haunted Librarian, you have delved too deep and poked into realms of knowledge better left undisturbed. Haunted Librarians have seen ink in dusty books move on its own, they have stared into dark corners and seen something staring back. They have uncovered the gruesome slivers of truth at the core of harmless fables. However, nothing they have seen, read, or discovered has quenched the burning curiosity at their core.

A Haunted Librarian will not be stopped by tales of peril and warnings of danger. They have armed their minds against the terrors in the night, typically through magical pacts or warding charms. A Haunted Librarian's primary weapon, like any good scholar, is their mind.

RECRUITING

Recruit a Librarian into your party when you need someone who can decipher strange texts, recall the weaknesses of legendary monsters, and maintain a cool head when creatures of the night attack.

DRIVES

To translate an ancient map and solve its puzzles.

To return a lost tome to the castle.

To finally find the door to the Invisible Library.

NAMES

Patrick, Adriel, Nicole, Senzaarous of the Three Eyes, Xi Bung, Aramavirumcanoabtroia

KIT

Scholar's robe, backpack, books and scrolls, bookbinding glue and inks, a treasure map, a magnifying glass, candles, a silver teapot, herbs, and powders

THE INFERNAL SUMMONER

The Infernal Summoner always knows **MAGIC (SUMMONING)**.

As a diabolist, are you **LOREWISE** or do you have a **FAMILIAR**?

Are you **ARDENT**, **BEAUTIFUL**, or **LEARNED**?



There are many paths to power, and the path of the summoner is rife with danger. Mastering the complex arts of **SUMMONING** gives the wizard raw power unlike any other – making animals, monsters, and even demons do your bidding. The most feared of the summoners are those that poke and prod the sleeping tombs of the old gods.

Most warlocks focus their magic on the summoning of demons to provide them with lore of the past, or to use as servants or soldiers. Summoners that come to their magic through old tomes and research tend to be Lorewise, where more reckless warlocks tend to have demonic imp familiars to handle the basic care and feeding of their summoned monsters.

Summoners as a lot are varied – as their craft is more about willpower than study. They tend to wear flashy clothes and adorn themselves with jewels and other objects that show their power. Some tend for the diaphanous gowns and diamond girdles, where others go heavy into blood red cloaks and demon horn face masks. Regardless the Infernal Summoner is usually flamboyant and over the top.

RECRUITING

Recruit a Summoner into your party to provide utility and shock troops but remember that a demon summoner always has a plan.

DRIVES

To rule, one must first serve.

To find a way to open a gate into the fae realms.

To break their contract with the dark god Vulthoom.

NAMES

Jarek, Kuliraga, Vaustus, Longwei, Kara of the Ebon Light,
Z'Hanique, Ivory Mask

KIT

Bronze face mask, black leathers, batwing cape, gold skull chain, whip, wickedly curved dagger, a chest filled with candles, chalk, blood vials, and strange reagents

THE JADED SELLSWORD

The Jaded Sellsword is always **WELL ARMED**.

As a mercenary soldier, do you have **RANK** or are you **WEALTHY**?

Are you **LUCKY, VETERAN**, or have Sworn Swords (**RETAINERS**)?



The Jaded Sellsword is a long-time mercenary, either a successful mercenary captain or a coin hungry sword for hire. The sellsword tends to favor basic weapons and armor, chainmail and sword, axe, or maul – the kind of gear that they get anywhere and get replaced anywhere.

Mercenary captains often have a handful of hard men that will follow them anywhere, not out of friendliness and loyalty, but more out of habit. Many old mercenaries are wealthy, or lucky, or both – being a sellsword isn't usually a good long-term career choice.

The Jaded Sellsword is done with wars and guarding caravans and is looking for a big score to either to get out of the business, or to settle down and spend their wealth. They've seen a lot, and they aren't afraid of murder or hard work.

RECRUITING

Recruit a Sellsword into the party when you need a serviceable blade or three, or when you know that the haul is worth splitting the money

DRIVES

Cash, cold hard coins.

A nostalgic urge and here we are back in the dark.

That bastard didn't pay, so we're switching sides and taking what were owed.

NAMES

Bron, Barak, Ulrik, Kasparov, Rona, Chaoxiang, Kojo

KIT

Boiled leather and ring mail, expensive boots, travelling pack, waraxe, longspear, a wineskin and a bottle of cognac, gold insignia pin



THE **KNOCKABOUT RANGER**

The Knockabout Ranger is always **ACCURATE**.

As a road-weary archer, are you **TRAVELLED** or **QUIET**?

Are you **NATUREWISE**, **TOUGH**, or do you have
a Beast Companion (**FAMILIAR**)?



The Knockabout Ranger is no stranger to the dangers of the wilderness. You excel at tracking and survival and can ease the burden of wilderness travel for any party. The Knockabout Ranger is a hard wanderer, a student of wilderness survival and hunting. Their quarry is anything that threatens the few bright spots of civilization left in the world, and their battleground is anywhere an enemy can leave a track on solid ground.

Like others who wander afar from keeps and towns, the Knockabout Ranger is not alone. A faithful beast is often by their side – a beloved friend and guardian, ready for the hunt. Rangers get their name from their habit of patrolling a range. They wear clothing suited for the environment they patrol, constructed to obscure their movement from the eyes of foes and quarry. They wear few adornments, choosing to minimize the chance of alerting their prey – everything is strapped, belted, and tied down.

RECRUITING

Recruit a Knockabout Ranger into your party when you need a tireless guide into the unknown or you need to track a clever target.

DRIVES

The most dangerous game lies down in this maze.

To return a companion to their ancestral home.

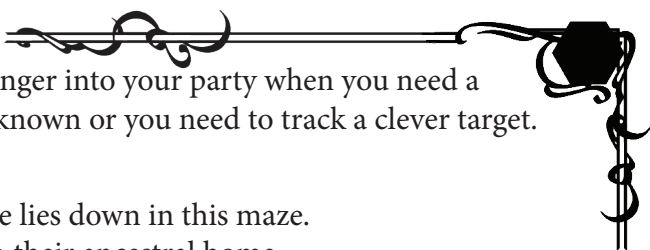
To reclaim this region from the Marquis Von Blackthrone.

NAMES

Crispin, Feng, Daniel the Shadow, Han, Ingrid Blackthrone, She Steps in Winter, Red Uther

KIT

Heavy waxed cloak, low boots, cotton trousers, leather jack, bedroll, camp gear, longbow, spear, hunting knife, a battered tea kettle



THE LAST ILF

The Last Ilf always has the **ILF LINEAGE***.

As one of the forgotten, do you practice **MAGIC***, or do you carry a **MAGIC WEAPON**?

Are you **BEAUTIFUL**, **CUNNING**, or **QUIET**?



Choose a **DOMAIN (Night, Forge, Sea, Sky, or Earth).*

When the Witch Wars ended so many lifetimes ago, the nations of the Elves departed, returning to some fey realms. They left behind their art, their mazes, and the few children of their mixing with humans – the Ilves. The Last Ilf is a survivor and a nomad, seeking adventure or glory, or mayhap simply a surcease from the ennui of their long lives. The last of the Ilves are misunderstood loners. They are products of an age long past. Because of this, some are masters of sorcery and others may carry dread weapons of the last age. The blood of the elves runs in their veins, and all have a deep connection to the old magic. Ilves stand taller than humans, though they are slighter of frame – willowy and angular. They have long pointed ears and bear telltale signs of their connections to the elements – shocks of odd hair color, varied skin tones, tiny horns, fully grown antlers, and the like. Their eyes are lacking in sclera, with large catlike irises, and staring pupils – that glow faintly in the darkness, another herald of their lineage.

Most Ilves' clothing seems garish (their eyes see the world differently than humans) and their modes of fashion are outdated, as Ilves live many lifetimes longer than a human.

RECRUITING

Recruit an Ilf into your Party to add ancient strength and majesty to your fellowship.

DRIVES

To capture in verse the color of a jewel that has never seen the moon.

To find what happened to a particular witch king's treasure.

To satiate the bloodlust of the devil-sword Dragonrender.

NAMES

Allric the Pale, Genevieve, Olwynn, Foxglove, The Pretender, Bane Arturus, Malmo

KIT

Oversized mantle, intricate mask, short silken tunic, thigh high boots, recurved bone bow, thin blade sword, pouch of coins from forgotten kings, a tiara of black iron and topaz

THE **MONSTER SLAYER**

A Monster Slayer is always **WELL ARMED**.

As a hunter of vicious monsters, are you **MAZEWISE** or

do you have a Pack of Loyal Hounds (**RETAINERS**)?

Are you **CUNNING**, **DEXTEROUS**, or **STRONG**?



The Monster Slayer is more than just a hunter, they are adventurers who are adept at fighting fiendish and gruesome aberrations and other spawn of the maze. All Monster Hunters are skilled with a multitude of weapons– and most carry a longbow, a crossbow, or javelins, in addition to their choice of bladed, blunt, and piercing melee weapons.

Many monster hunters act as guides to other adventures (Mazewise). Sometimes, they are more loner types; just knocking about with a pack of dogs to take down prey.

Monster Slayers wear lighter armor, usually studded leather, or a chain shirt, and carry sensible weapons – hand axes, broadswords, longbows, and spears. Slayers tend to wear thick boots and carry heavy packs. because you never know what you are going to find when you kick open the door to that dungeon.

RECRUITING

Recruit a Slayer into your party to take on the biggest and baddest of the monsters that you encounter.

DRIVES

To spit in the face of a Giant.

To mount a wyvern head on the wall of the tavern.

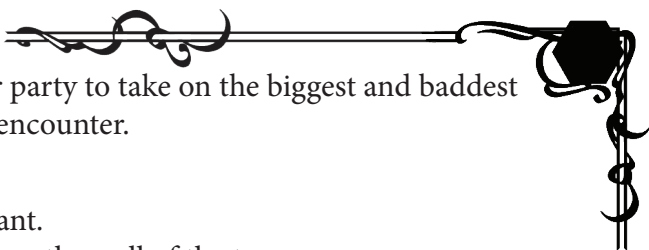
To slay the Jaggedhorn King who ate your brother.

NAMES

Summers, Candor, Isamu, Maz Rach, Klug, Vultan the Unstoppable, Kondo

KIT

Shield and sword, heavy boots, backpack of traps and oddments, wickedly huge flail, skinning knives, taxidermy tools, a necklace of knucklebones from kills



THE NIGHTHAWK ASSASSIN

The Nighthawk Assassin is always **DEADLY**.

As a hard killer, are you **ACCURATE** or **QUIET**?

Are you **AGILE**, **FAST**, or **KEEN**?



The Nighthawk is a professional killer – not a solidier, or a simple thug. Nighthawk Assassins are trained in all forms of weapons, though they tend to prefer simple, effective means like longswords, sharp knives, short bows, and the garrote.

Quiet assassins specialize in getting in and out of hard-to-reach places. Some assassins are more like snipers, focusing on killing at a distance. Most wear dark cloaks, soft boots, and pack light. Some Assassins prefer to be inconspicuous and garb themselves in fine dresses or well-tailored vests and capes.

Assassins favor dark colors and focus on not standing out in a crowd. An Assassin that wears snazzy black leathers and shiny boots usually winds up dead in an alleyway. Assassins secret knives around their person and hide poison in rings and belt buckles; all while making sure that nothing on them catches the light.

RECRUITING

Recruit an Assassin into your party to make sure that the job gets done, no matter how messy it might become.

DRIVES

To live up to their particular code of honor.

To leave the world of paid killing and try to find another life.

To root out and murder every last Adherent of the Xanthic Temple.

NAMES

Whisper, Svan, Jiro, Aswad, Armin, Ghul, The Carnelian, Whitney

KIT

Brocade dress concealing a tight leather catsuit, rolled case of poisons, seven knives, punching dagger, three wigs, a wide belt with a secret garotte, lockpicks



THE OUTCAST BUGBEAR

The Outcast Bugbear is always of the **BUGBEAR LINEAGE**.

As a lone monster, are you **DEADLY** or **ARMORED**?

Are you **STRONG**, **TOUGH**, or **TRAVELLED**?



The Outcast Bugbear is a hulking brute, towering over the humans in the party. They are incredibly tough, with leathery, bristly hides which make armor seem useless. Bugbears have long tusks that jut from their huge jaws. They are almost as intimidating as they are stoic.

The Outcast Bugbear was kicked out or left their clan for some reason. As an Outcast, they tend to either shun their own kind – learning to survive in the wilderness alone– or focus on being the greatest bugbear – being stronger and more deadly than their cousins.

Bugbears wear little in the way of clothing – skirts or loincloths, perhaps a leather harness or cuirass – as their skin is covered in rough fur. Bugbears weave feathers and bones into their fur, especially around their faces, and are fond of piercings, brands, and tattoos. Few bugbears wear footwear, as their padded and hobnailed feet are protection enough.

Bugbears favor large weapons – like great maces, huge cudgels, and giant war axes.

RECRUITING

Recruit a Bugbear into your Party to crush the weak and to strike fear into your enemies' hearts.

DRIVES

To be the strongest.

To find their own path in a dangerous world.

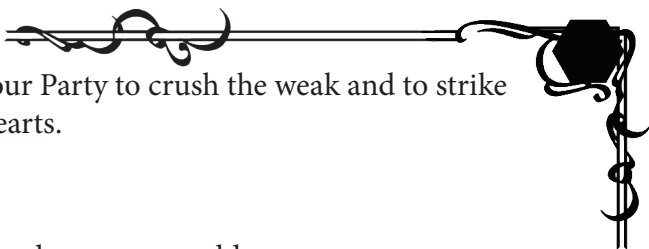
To find a treasure that will win the heart of Cruel Gravsk.

NAMES

Big Vosh, Slohd, Wolf Eater, Tharg, Thrun, Gravsk, Bohr, Jerja, Jeet, Jenna, Hellhide, Broken Tusk, Chunks

KIT

Serpent leather loincloth, a spiked club



THE PUZZLING LOCKSMITH

The Puzzling Locksmith is always **GEARWISE**.

As a door cracker and riddle master, are you carrying **TOOLS** or are you **LEARNED**?

Are you **STREETWISE**, **KEEN**, or **QUIET**?



The Puzzling Locksmith is an oddity, even in the rarefied world of venturing. The Locksmith is an honorable profession, but some take it to extremes. Masters of breaking locks, opening doors, and springing traps – the Locksmith adventurer is a thrill seeker. While most Locksmiths are experts in traps and mechanisms, a few are more sagely – tending to be riddle-smiths, physics, and natural philosophers. Others are more hands on, swinging a wrench and a hammer more than understanding why the gears twist.

A Puzzling Locksmith is attracted to traps – both laying them down against their enemies and demolishing those laid out against them. Beware a bored locksmith.

Like most guild traders, the Locksmith tends to wear simple clothes worn tight (so as not to get in the way of their work). Leather vests, tight hose, quartz goggles, and stout boots are common. Many wear large cloaks or capes that can be easily dropped if they catch on fire, get stuck in a gear, and can be thrown over tubes blowing out smoke or poison gas.

RECRUITING

Recruit a Locksmith into your party if you expect to face deadly traps, or if you think you may get thrown into a cell.

DRIVES

The thrill of the click, just one more trap undone.

Getting all of the treasure is much better than just getting some of the treasure.

Getting out of town right now is a great idea, the guard hasn't figured out who did it yet.

NAMES

Gond, Homer, Mikka, Jaq, Seven, Twist, Ichiro

KIT

Tight hose, leather vest, hard boots, oft-patched cloak, toolbelt, goggles, bullseye lantern, extra gloves, vials of acid, a ten-foot pole, an iron hammer

THE QUACK ALCHEMIST

The Quack Alchemist always has Potions (MAGIC ITEM).

As a charlatan and snake oil merchant, are you LOREWISE or NATUREWISE?

Do others call you DEXTEROUS, KEEN, or CHARMING?



“Only the mad pursue Alchemy” is an old adage. There may be some truth in it, as alchemists tend to live dangerous lives, even if they never leave their laboratories! Adventuring Alchemists are always ready with their Potions – vials of acid, elixirs of strength, and grenades of molten fire. Some Alchemists view their art as simply part of nature, focusing on curatives and narcotics. Others seek to unlock ancient wisdom and find ways to turn gold into power. Regardless, an Alchemist that travels with adventurers is always a bit of a faker – more merchant than sage, and more madman than philosopher – as you have to be to carry around volatile potions and philters.

Field Alchemists usually dress in heavy robes, or tunics with leather aprons. They tend to have large packs, and to strap vials, tubes, and containers across their bodies. Alchemists favor goggles and other eye protection, as well as leather masks, caps, and reinforced hats. Their clothing always seems to be singed and to have at least a few burnt holes.

RECRUITING

Recruit an Alchemist into your Party when you need a scholar, but you also need a wildcard.

DRIVES

To solve the elixir of life, or at least turn some lead into gold.

The pretty colors are the best part.

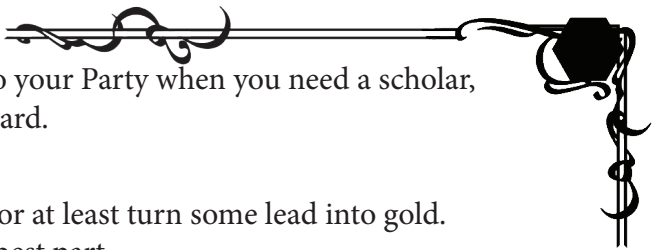
The ingredients that you need for the King Elixir are quite rare and expensive.

NAMES

Herm, Three Finger Callie, Okpara, Ellison, Kaede, Liang, Doctor Darl

KIT

Leather apron over working tunic and trousers, heavy waxed gloves, bandoleer of vials, tongs, too many knives, crossbow



THE RELUCTANT HERO

The Reluctant Hero is always **YOUNG**.

As the chosen one, do you have a **MAGIC WEAPON** or a **MAGIC ITEM**?

Do others say that you are **BEAUTIFUL**, **CHARMING**, or **LUCKY**?



The Reluctant Hero has a purpose. Is that purpose for good or for ill? Only time will tell. Doomed by fate, a curse, a foil, or a terrible choice, the Reluctant Hero fights on in a vain attempt to find out the riddle to their prophesied life. The hero knows that they will eventually be undone – perhaps they may save the day in their downfall.

Perhaps they are a farm boy with a destiny. Or a maid who inherits a magic lamp. The idiot torchbearer that picks up a magic sword. Whatever the reason, the Reluctant Hero is now in the thick of it and a true Hero tackles every challenge with purpose and a towering belief in their cause.

RECRUITING

Recruit a Hero into your party when you have a demanding or dangerous challenge before you and need unwavering bold strokes to have any chance at victory.

DRIVES

To complete the three prophecies.

To show your stepmother who you really are.

To throw the Ring of the Dark Lord into the fires of Doom Mountain.

NAMES

Ged, Pug, Frodo, Rapunzel, Emily, Connor, Rand, Ganna, Gold, Nakisisa

KIT

Shining sword, blood red doublet, once white cloak, mysterious ring, sack of onions, and sewing kit



THE SAVAGE BARBARIAN

The Savage Barbarian is always **TOUGH**.

As a lone hero, are you **DEADLY** or **STRONG**?

Are you **ARDENT**, **HALE**, or **NATUREWISE**?



Barbarian is a strong word, here it means the young tribes and nations that are growing in the cracks of the old world. The Savage Barbarian is a lone hero coming from the outer wilderness to wring their destiny out from the ruins of the ancient world.

The Savage Barbarian is a sight to behold – muscular and immodest. They know they are strong and alluring, and that others are weak and old. The Savage Barbarian generally carries a signature weapon, something of significance, but they are just as deadly with their bare hands.

Barbarians from hot lands wear loincloths and animal pelts. From cold climes, they wear fur cloaks and woven shirts. Most all wear their hair long and loose – letting it fly in the wind as they as they run across the deserted byways.

RECRUITING

Recruit a Barbarian into you party for strength and fearlessness.

DRIVES

To stare off the edge of the world.

To crush their enemies and take their silver.

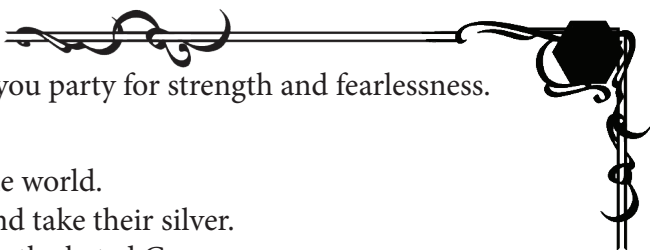
To never bend the knee to the hated Grom.

NAMES

Jorn, Autumn, Obayana, Nan, Hard Farg, Nassor, Broadhudila, Wruthgar

KIT

Fur lined boots and cloak, leather loincloth, elk-skull girdle, massive two-handed sword, rucksack filled with food, loot, and special roots



THE TALENTED THIEF

The Talented Thief is always **STREETWISE**.

As a scofflaw and a footpad, are you **ACCURATE** or **QUIET**?

Are you **AGILE**, **CHARMING**, or **KEEN**?



A thief is a broad term for a footpad, a criminal, a robber. Thieves, unlike some other roguish types, are generally not part of a Guild – preferring to steal from the rich and give to themselves. Many a talented Thief has taken to adventuring as a safer way to gain filthy lucre in these benighted times. Some thieves master the arts of hiding in the shadows and moving silently. Others focus on moving swiftly and expertly while carrying a loaded crossbow or throwing knives.

Thieves tend to favor light cloaks and capes – coverings that are easy to drop, but also cover your whole body in deep shadows. Most tend to carry knives and bludgeons; though rapiers, short swords, and crossbows are not uncommon. A smart thief ties their gear down, so as not to make noise, and often wears scarves, kerchiefs, or masks to hide their identities. Footpads wear serviceable boots – usually kept clean and treadless to avoid leaving a trail and to grip the often-uneven flagstones and rooftops.

RECRUITING

Recruit a Thief into your party to guard against the shadows and to ambush your enemies.

DRIVES

To keep their pouch jingling, and their head attached.

To become invisible, or as close as they can get.

To steal the Crown of Blood from the Vampire Queen.

NAMES

Einar Lightfingers, Dara, Slovotsky, Jewel, Munyiga, Chung

KIT

Hooded lantern, black woolen tunic, reversible cloak, thieves' tools and lock-picks, a brace of throwing knives, a black rapier, pouch of fake coins, pouch of real coins



THE UNDERGROUND DRUID

The Underground Druid can always **SHAPESHIFT**.

As a denizen of the underground world, are you **NATUREWISE** or **MAZEWISE**?

Are you **STRONG**, **KEEN**, or **DEADLY**?



The Underground Druid is a mysterious walker between the old world and the new. They are in tune with the primal and primordial world. The stones, the trees, the river, and the wind all speak to them, and they talk back. Few in the world are more in tune with the world outside of the crumbling boundaries of light carved out by castles, keeps, and walled towns than the Underground Druid. They hear voices on the wind from old crypts, they see stories in broken stones, and know the direction by sense of smell. The Underground Druid generally starts out as a hermit or cave dweller, but they are called deeper into the earth. The unnatural, the restless, and those that foul the plants and water of the world are the sworn enemies of the Underground Druid and they bend their considerable gifts towards understanding the marvelous underground world of lichen, mushrooms, stalactites, stalagmites, and stranger things. Above the twisting mazes, Sun Druids and Moon Druids often clash; but the Underground Druids are solitary and uninterested in the struggles of the overworld. Half the time they are morphing into creatures of the mazes, both great and small. A druid's garb consists of fur and leather of muted browns, greens, and other colors found in the dark. When they are performing sacred rituals to ancient powers, they don long robes of grey wool or go skyclad. They are usually adorned with trinkets made from crystals, rock, wood, feathers, and bone. The Underground Druid often covers their body in tattoos, ink, or paint – and it is not uncommon for them to wear monstrous masks.

RECRUITING

Recruit a Druid into your party when you need a champion to guide you through the dark below.

DRIVES

To befriend all the beasts that haunt the underground.

To remove themselves from the friction and fragility of humankind.

To follow the Secret River back to its source and remove the Blight.

NAMES

Mwamba, Organna, The Stone Ghost, Roar, Old Gwent, Harriet,

KIT

Owlbear cloak, faded robe, leather sandals, bone staff, shoulder bag filled with mushrooms, a fire beetle farm used as a lantern

THE VALIANT DRAGON

The Valiant Dragoon is always **ARMORED**.

As a heavily armored soldier, are you **DEADLY** or do you have Shield Bearers (**RETAINERS**)?

Are you **ARDENT**, **STRONG**, or **INTIMIDATING**?



The Valiant Dragoon inspires fear in all that see them in their shining armor. As imposing as their armor, some Dragons wield massive weapons – like Great Swords and Giant Mauls. Others tend to have a squad of sworn shields, that they can trust to stand up to and take on an incoming attack.

Dragoons are always outfitted in heavy armor, usually plate mail with shields. They tend to travel heavy, and like having people to carry their gear and weapons. Most Dragons are expert horsemen and appreciate hard riding and hard living. Dragons tend to like heraldic excess, and many will carry emblazoned shields or fly bright banners.

RECRUITING

Recruit a Dragoon into your Party to break down doors, lift gates, and to take the brunt of the assault on their weathered shields.

DRIVES

For glory, honor, and pride.

To protect the people of the region from vicious monsters.

To defeat the evil army being raised by Vulthoom and Black Bargle.

NAMES

Syr Faddah, Regulus the Brave, Chan Ming, Adebola, Syr Crass,
The Dragon

KIT

Fine plate armor, riding spurs, heavy flail, longsword, sleeping tent, banners, chest of wine and spirits



THE WISE WITCH

The Wise Witch always knows **MAGIC***.

As a soothsayer, are you **LOREWISE** or **NATUREWISE**?

Are you **CUNNING**, **LEARNED**, or do you have a **FAMILIAR***?



Choose a **DOMAIN (Night, Sky, Sea, Forge, or Earth).*

Witches are a different form of spell caster, focusing their time more on learning and practicing their cunning ways. Some Witches master the natural path, focusing their study on medicine, plants, and the ways of the world. These Witches tend towards Earth, Sea, or Sky magics and familiars (like owls and cats). Darker Witches study the old ways and forgotten wisdom and tend to have Forge or Night familiars – coal ifrits and moaning ghosts.

Witches are a solitary lot, and don't spend too much time thinking about what they wear. Most clad themselves in simple garb, dark woolen robes, or sensible dresses. Everything that a Witch wears is practical and chosen to hide their frame and their bottles of dusts, powders, and reagents. Until you spot their familiar, it's common to mistake a Witch for a scholar or a farmer. Many Witches (like Wizards) eschew fighting with weapons, though some still carry swords or daggers. Many will carry a focus or fetish – a wand, a staff, a crystal orb, or a hefty tome. Witches with a dark bent may carry a skull or taxidermy fetish.

RECRUITING

Recruit a Witch into your Party if you need solid decisions, a no-nonsense leader, and hard-won knowledge.

DRIVES

To keep the village safe from illness and monsters.

To understand the depths of power, regardless of the cost.

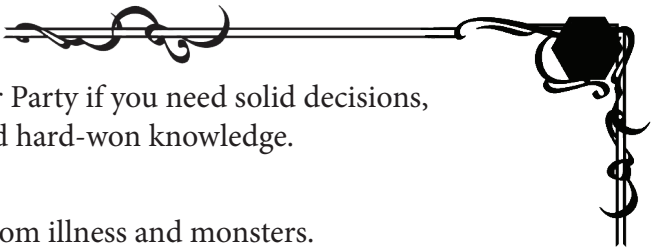
To wring the Tears of Immortality from the Eye of Zorn.

NAMES

Zelda, Amida, Sister Hrang, Mother Wisdom, Franq, Heather Rose, Midnight, Roburt Hyde, Aki

KIT

Functional dress, sensible boots, secret pockets filled with reagents, short-sword, woven cloak of ram's wool and tree branches, antlered helm



THE ZEALOUS CULTIST

The Zealous Cultist is always **LOREWISE**.

As a seeker of dark knowledge, do you have Adherents (**RETAINERS**) or a dark **FAMILIAR**?

Are you **INTIMIDATING**, **OLD**, or do you have **RANK**?



There are few more excited to enter the darkness of the underworld of mazes than the true believer. A Zealous Cultist and their followers are looking for artifacts, lore, and power from their forgotten and slumbering gods amidst the ruins of old and forgotten empires.

The Zealous Cultist wears robes left over from an earlier age, and often travels masked or at least under a hood. Known for carrying wicked knives, Cultists wield all sorts of exotic and outmoded weapons.

Most Cultists that are travelling into the maze are accompanied by either a servant of their god, or by other adherents of their odd faith. Many adventuring zealots have rank within their secret brotherhood. All cultists know too much about things that they shouldn't which makes them useful companions in a dungeon. The secrets of their forgotten religion drive them – for good or ill. Cultists tend to make excellent companions – they are hardworking, diligent, quiet, and filled with purpose– until their god asks them to sacrifice you.

RECRUITING

Recruit a Cultist into your party if you need secret knowledge only they can provide, but watch your back.

NAMES

Brother Jeriko, Sister Fane, Sibling Unna, Traveler, Kris of Jeet, The Foremost

DRIVES

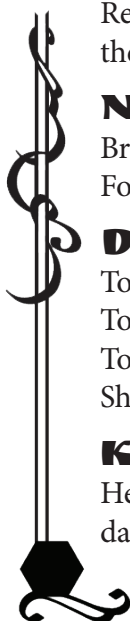
To unearth long dead secrets.

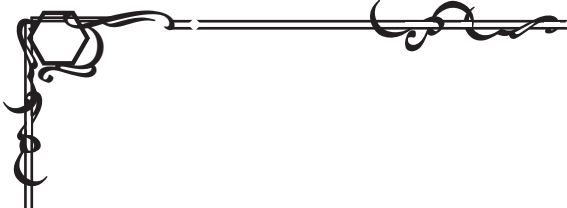
To secure wealth or magic for their temple.

To subvert the Prophecy of Andalous and return Grom from the Shadows.

KIT

Heavy woolen robes, brass mask, holy symbol, ornate staff, blessed dagger, begging bowl





interlude

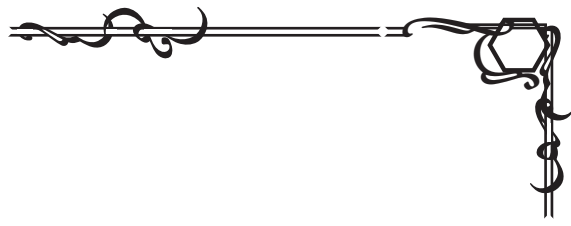
Shackles chafing against his wrists, Izarro forced open the door.

Perhaps he might have paused to wonder if the smoky emanation coming from the room might indicate it was not, in fact, an exit. But the rush of freedom had spoiled his good senses, and he was in a hurry, all too eager to leave this grimy, too-warm underground labyrinth behind.

Now he faced down Bargle the Black, his once-captor. If he had to, Izarro would fight the necromancer using the rusted and broken chains trailing from his arms and legs, souvenirs of his tenure in this dungeon. But the Lishcelle did not turn to face him. He stood at a massive cauldron, the flames beneath crackling hungrily as a mysterious liquid bubbled within. “Adventurer,” said Bargle as he stirred. “You’re just in time.”

Izarro made fists with his hands. “I’m here to kill you,” he said, trying to believe it himself. He inhaled shakily. The room smelled of oil, and bones, and the darkest magics. He remembered well the particular scent of potionwork, his early days in the Blue City returning to him as he recalled his mother and aunt bent over the alembics.

“Very good, very good,” said Bargle. “Yes, you’ll do excellently. A spirited, confident sort like yourself is just what I need.” The wizard parted his moldering lips to sip a steaming taste from the belly of his gnarled wooden spoon.



Just then, Izarro noticed something coalescing within the potion's relentless smoke. An outline, the beginnings of a face—souls. Now he understood where the other captives dragged from the dungeon by Bargle's minions had been going. He stared into the roiling face, wondering if he'd recognize it, but it was only a shade.

Izarro gave his wrists an experimental spin. The chains would probably work as weapons, though he'd have to get close—too close. Where were the others, curse the Spider God? Not five minutes ago, they'd separated, each vowing to explore a similar corridor on this floor.

"Fight me, you villain," Izarro shouted.

"Still feisty?" Bargle asked. The creature was facing him now, spoon abandoned. Bargle's left hand began to glimmer, flashes of magic leaping into being as it worked its fingers deftly. The sorcerer's eyes lit greengold as it smiled triumphantly at Izarro. "This," it said, "will be delicious."

Half-panicked, Izarro glanced about the room. The implements of sinister alchemy, yes, but what for combat?

Then his eyes fell upon it.

The glint of a silver rapier, the needle of its blade terminating in a crossguard of fine metalwork. Izarro called on everything he had left. Izarro had always been agile, relentless, fast—he leapt, vaulting over Bargle the Black, over the cauldron, chains aflutter like streamers. The black mage stumbled back, the spell flickering, though it did not break.

In a moment, the sword was in Izarro's hands...



being rules for harnessing the power
of magic , including a grimoire
of puissant spells and magical items



Part Three

ON MAGIC



ON MAGIC

“...a maze of tiny, interconnected rooms, all fretted from floor to ceiling with shelves, and no room big enough for more than one chair. The inner ones were lit by dim yellow lamps attached to the ceiling, and all of them were permeated with the vanilla smell of old book paper and, faintly, the tarry reek of the old man’s pipe tobacco.”

- Tim Powers, *The Book of Magic*

Magic is ancient, primal, and very real. Magic dominated the ancient world, until it fell under the weight of gods and godlike wizards fighting over control of magic. In this benighted era, control and knowledge of magic has fallen, but it is still a part of the lives of even the most common folk.

Magic is infused in the very fantasy of the world. It is the explanation for most things – why does, oh magic, right... Magic is living and breathing – and everyone from the lowliest urchin to the mightiest king is subject to its all-encompassing power.

Players have access to Magic in a variety of ways – most often as Sorcery Aspect characters that cast spells or have magic power. Characters could have magic items or weapons, be part of a magical lineage, or have access to magical actions and effects.



**SKY RULES OVER SEA.
SEA WASHES AWAY FORGE.
FORGE BREAKS THROUGH EARTH.
EARTH LOCKS AWAY NIGHT.
NIGHT SWALLOWS UP SKY.**

ON THE **ELEMENTAL DOMAINS**

Magic Users understand the world as being created out of five core forces known as the **DOMAINS**– the Sky, the Sea, the Earth, the Forge, and the Night.

Domains are the “elements” that make up the world. They are the building blocks of creation itself. Each domain controls and dictates how an essential force in the universe operates – and is capable of controlling, creating, and reshaping it. Everything that exists falls into one of these five domains.

Domains determine the corners of what Magic can do, as well as defining the look and feel of their effects. Each domain is countered by a different domain and controls another domain – forming the balance of nature.

ON THE **SCHOOLS OF SORCERY**

Now, while magic domains explain the foundations of the world – the powers of sorcerers lie in manipulating and managing those forces. The act of wielding magic is called Sorcery, and the world of wizards divides the actions that a mage takes with magic into five schools.

Wizard philosophy concerns itself with five schools of magical actions: Illumination, Conjunction, Summoning, Evocation, and Enchantment. **SCHOOLS** are actions that define “how” you channel Magic into action. They are the limitations of a Wizard’s ability to control magic.

To a wizard every magic effect from a spell to the gods themselves can be thought of as a magic equation – where a **WILL** (the actor, usually a mage) shapes a **DOMAIN** (the what) through the use of a **SCHOOL** (the how) into a **FORM** (a spell, an item, a being, etc.).

ON **MAGIC USERS**

When a magic user focuses on a **DOMAIN** (and can use any school of magic to affect it) they are called mages. When a magic user focuses on a **SCHOOL** (and can apply that to any Domain) they are generally called wizards. All of these sorcerers also have specific names for specific combinations or areas of study – as magic users are nothing if not organized and specific (if not outright pedantic).



PROVENANCE

Magic items, weapons, and spells come from somewhere. When you are making a character, define the provenance of yours. Most “consumable” magic items are something that you make and consume – like scrolls, star charts, potions, or voodoo dolls. Sometimes it makes sense for a story to have a more permanent item created by the character – like a sword that you forged, or a knife cut from a Mammoth Lion tooth. Some magic items are gifted to a character – like an heirloom shield, or a destined weapon, perhaps a boon from a Sky Giant, or a curse from an old demon.

CASTING SPELLS

“The Pattern burns upon it, within it, an intricate, shimmering maze of curved lines...”

- Roger Zelazny, *Nine Princes in Amber*

The basis of spellcasting in Mazes is combining a Domain with a School. A Sorcery Character may have **MAGIC** of either a **DOMAIN** (e.g., Forge Magic) or of a **SCHOOL** (e.g., **ENCHANTMENT**). When casting a spell (or creating a magic effect), the caster must have at least one of the sides of the equation. So, enchanting a magic blade would be **ENCHANTMENT** and **FORGE** magic – and could be accomplished by a mage with either **ENCHANTMENT** magic or **FORGE** magic.

Now, when a sorcerer casts a spell – that’s spending a **STAR**. This means that the wizard is going beyond the general and mundane magic they have. They are investing power into the action. In these cases, the mage doesn’t make a roll, they explain the effect and the maze controller will adjudicate the effect.

For many actions with Mazes, a player can use Magic as the “fiction” of their action – these are described in depth in this section as “Mundane Magic”. When a character has access to **MAGIC** – whether it be in the form of spell, item, or lineage – how you describe some basic actions in a **MAZES** game may change.

These actions might be considered “spells” in other games and would use up some of your resources; however, in Mazes, the idea is that you **ARE** “magical” and so the color of some of your actions is going to be magical. Without spending **STARS** (which we will describe in the next section), you have the ability to describe your regular in game actions as “magical.” Just as a martial character may use the fiction of a sword or an axe to describe what is happening when they roll **BLADES**, a magical character may say that it’s a fireball or swarming ghosts attacking their foe. So, just as a fighter may swing a sword (the fiction), the action in the game is a **BLADES** roll; so too may a wizard make a **BLADES** roll by hurling a lightning bolt (the fiction).

MUNDANE MAGICS



BOOKS

When making **BOOKS** rolls, a magic character may explain that they are casting divination spells, or scrying using a mirror (Spells). Maybe their familiar (Familiar) is actually seeing things and explaining it to them. Perhaps their enchanted dagger (Weapon) glows in the presence of danger or rubies...

When thinking about classic dungeon **RPGs** and spells (or converting material) these are anything that that says “detect.”



BOOTS

When making **BOOTS** rolls, your magic effects may make it easier to move, or do the moving for you. When escaping the clutches of a giant’s grasping hand, perhaps you turn into mist (Sea Lineage), or when leaping over a wall you flap your angelic wings (Sky Lineage). Your skeleton retainers (A Night Familiar) step into the swinging battle axe, or you quickly make yourself rooted to the earth like a tree (Earth spell) to avoid being blown off a ledge.



BLADES

Perhaps the easiest to describe, your basic attacks can be spells. Instead of hitting something with your staff or dagger – throw Fireballs (Forge), arc Lightning Bolts (Sky), dance with and control Giant Ocean Eels (Sea), strangle with Entangling Vines (Earth), or hurl shadowy skulls (Night).

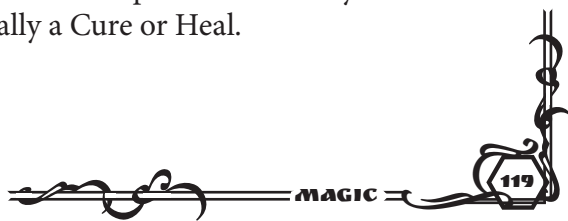
When thinking about classic dungeon **RPGs** and spells almost any offensive spell will fall under Blades – including fireballs, magic missiles, lightning bolts, freezing rays, etc.



BONES

When taking **BONES** actions your magic will take the form of something that affects you (or the world around you) bodily – you may shrug off that poison because of your troll blood (Earth Lineage), or because you quaff a potion of resistance (Magic Item– Potions). Maybe you put up a Wall of Fire (Forge Spells) to avoid the giant insect swarm surrounding you.

When thinking about classic dungeon **RPGs** and spells – these are your protections, shields, walls, and occasionally a Cure or Heal.



DOMAIN OF SKY

The Sky is the domain of the air, wind, and clouds. It covers all things gaseous. Sky is the magic of storm and thunder; it covers lightning bolts and thundercracks. Sky magic is responsible for sound and hearing. Birds and other flying creatures are the Sky's domain. Sky magic abjures Sea magic, as the Sky rules over the Sea.



XIELO
𐄎𐄌𐄚𐄛𐄚𐄛

As a sorcerer or a scholar, Aeromancer or angel talker, you have access to the magic of the **SKY** – air, gases, sound and hearing, weather, perception, memory, and all the flying things of the world.

☉ SKY

𐄎𐄌𐄚𐄛𐄚𐄛

- | | |
|------------------|-------------------------------|
| ○ conjure | air, gases, gravity |
| ○ abjure | sky rules over sea |
| ◐ divine | sounds |
| ◑ feign | hearing, auditory illusions |
| ▽ evoke | lightning, thunder, sound |
| ▣ hex | hexing books rolls |
| ▣ enchant | perception, memory |
| ◑ summon | birds, insects, flying things |

DOMAIN OF SEA

MARO
𐌆𐌚𐌙𐌗



The Sea is the domain of the oceans, the water, and ancient times. Sea controls all things related to liquids. Sea Magic is the force of cold and time passing. Sea creatures of all types are summoned by the Sea domain.

The Sea controls taste and smell, the senses most tied to memory and time. The Sea is rolling and flexible, controlling all things Boots related. Sea Magic abjures

Forge Magic, as the Sea washes away the Forge (corroding metal and putting out flames).

☉ **SEA**

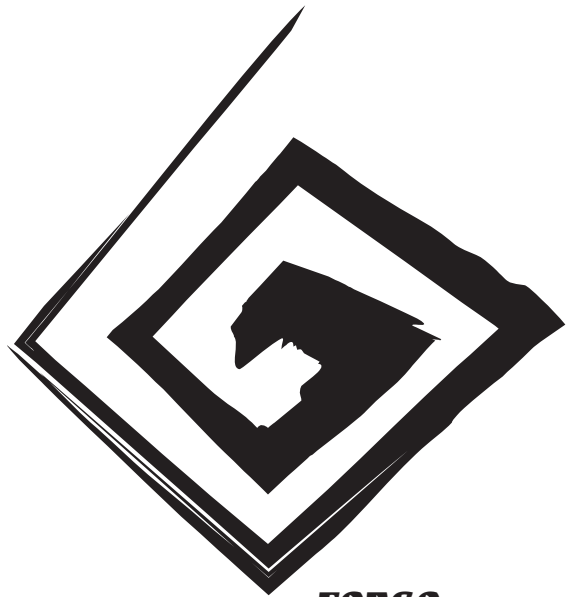
𐌆𐌚𐌙𐌗

○ conjure	water, liquids
○ abjure	sea washes away forge
◐ divine	the past
◑ feign	taste and smell
▽ evoke	cold, wet, ice
◻ hex	hexing boots rolls
◻ enchant	speed, agility, dexterity
◻ summon	fish, sea life

DOMAIN OF FORGE

The Forge is the domain at the heart of the human condition. The Forge is the beating of metal into blades, and the burning away of doubts. The Forge is the flame, the fire, and the heat. The Forge controls human passion, and can be used to charm intelligent beings, or fool their sight into seeing things that are not there. Forge magic abjures Earth Magic, as the Forge breaks the earth and burns the plants.

As a Forge sorcerer, fireball magician, warcaster, or item enchanter— you have access to the magic of Flames and Metal, Illusion and Sight, of Passion and Anger.



FORGO
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FORGE

𐌲𐌹𐌿𐌸𐌰𐌹𐌺𐌰

- | | |
|------------------|--------------------------------|
| ◯ conjure | fire, flames, metal |
| ◯ abjure | forge breaks through earth |
| ◐ divine | sight |
| ◑ feign | illusions |
| ▽ evoke | heat, lodestones |
| ▣ hex | hexing blades rolls |
| ▣ enchant | anger, offense, passion |
| ◡ summon | charm and mind control effects |

DOMAIN OF EARTH



TERO

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The Earth is more than just rocks and earth; it encompasses all the living things of the earth, from plants and trees to the creatures of the land.

The Earth domain evokes the living force, as well as its opposite— poisons and disease. Most animals are able to be summoned by an Earth mage. Earth Magic abjures Night Magic, as the Earth locks the darkness away underground.

As an earth druid or sorcerer, geomancer, or healer— you have access to the magic of Earth and Rock, Minerals and Vegetables, Trees and Animals, Growth, Poisons, and Emotion.

△ EARTH

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○ conjure	stone, wood, mineral, vegetable
○ abjure	earth locks away night
◐ divine	emotions, empathy
△ feign	emotions, sense of touch
▽ evoke	poison, life force
◻ hex	hexing bones rolls, healing saves
◻ enchant	growth, strength, defense
◻ summon	most animals

DOMAIN OF NIGHT

NOKTO
𐄂𐄂𐄂𐄂𐄂

The Night is the force of darkness and entropy, not evil. Night does summon ghosts and souls because death is the natural end of all living things. Night always conquers day. Night magic governs the strange and the unquiet. Night is tomorrow, the unknown future. Night evokes fear and strange magics. Night magic abjures Sky magic, as the Night swallows up the Sky every day. As a necromancer, night mage, dark witch, or blasted warlock, you have access to the magic of Night and Shadows, Souls, The Future, Magic Auras, Fear, Entropy, Dreams, and the Undead.



★ NIGHT

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- | | |
|-----------|---------------------------------|
| ○ conjure | shadows, souls |
| ○ abjure | night swallows up sky |
| ◐ divine | the future |
| ◑ feign | auras, magic |
| ▽ evoke | fear, entropy, death energy |
| □ hex | hexing chaos, deaths door rolls |
| □ enchant | awareness, dreams |
| ◇ summon | ghosts, the undead |

THE SCHOOL OF CONJURATION



ABJURI
 ଓହାଡ଼ାହାଡ଼ି



Conjuration is the art of using magic to call forth the raw elemental forces of the world. Its inverse is called, Abjuration, the art of removing or protecting against those elemental forces. Each Domain creates (conjures) a different sort of elemental substance and can abjure a different element. Common conjurations are lighting fires, drawing forth walls of earth, or creating air to breathe underwater. Abjuration is the path of dismissing, discarding, and destroying elemental forces, as well as protecting against them. Common abjurations are shields, wards, counter spells, and exorcism.

CONJURE



- | | |
|---------|---------------------------------|
| ☉ sky | air, gases, gravity |
| ☪ sea | water, liquids |
| ⚔ forge | fire, flames, metal |
| ♁ earth | stone, wood, mineral, vegetable |
| ♆ night | shadows, souls |

ABJURE



- | | |
|---------|----------------------------|
| ☯ sky | sky rules over sea |
| ☪ sea | sea washes away forge |
| ⬮ forge | forge breaks through earth |
| ⬮ earth | earth locks away night |
| ✱ night | night swallows up sky |

THE SCHOOL OF ILLUMINATION

Divination and Illusion are two sides of the same coin – using magic to determine or occlude the truth of the senses. Divination is the art of gleaning information magically. Each domain provides different kinds of information that can be gathered and processed. Common divinations are telepathy, far seeing, scrying, identification, and seeing magical auras. Each of the Domains describes a different set of senses. Illusion is the opposite of Divination; it feigns the effects of true perception. It is the art of warping sensory information, and the primary reason that many don't trust soothsayers as illusion and divination are so close.



DIVINE



 sky	sounds (clairaudience, far talking)
 sea	the past (retrocognition)
 forge	sight (far seeing, scrying)
 earth	emotions (empathy)
 night	the future (clairvoyance)

FEIGN



 sky	hearing, auditory illusions
 sea	taste and smell
 forge	illusions
 earth	emotions, sense of touch
 night	auras, magic

THE SCHOOL OF ENCHANTMENT



HEKSI
 海 龍 地 夜



Imbuing objects or creatures (including yourself) with magic power is called **ENCHANTMENT**. When a mage influences the world in this way, it can be either positive (a boon or buff), or negative (a curse or hex). Enchanting is generally cast into a thing (called Curses or Boons and are the basis of magical items). Hexes and buffs are the same magic but cast onto living things – generally just called Hexing. Each of the domains is responsible for a different type of action in the universe – which in game terms apply to different kinds of rolls and actions (Books, Boots, Blades, Bones, and Chaos).

□ ENCHANT

海 龍 地 夜

☉ sky	vision, perception, memory
☪ sea	speed, agility, dexterity
⬠ forge	anger, offense, passion
▲ earth	growth, strength, defense
★ night	awareness, dreams

□ HEX

海 龍 地 夜

☉ sky	books rolls
☪ sea	boots rolls
⬠ forge	blades rolls
▲ earth	bones rolls, healing saves
★ night	chaos rolls, death's door saves

THE SCHOOL OF EVOCATION

Each domain represents and controls a different form of energy. Evoking that energy, which is similar but distinct from conjuring that element – is called **EVOCATION**. Gathering, channeling, and binding magical power is the role of an Evoker. Evocation is its own opposite, as the inverse of channeling energy is repelling energy.

Common evocations are throwing lightning, generating heat, or sapping the life force of an enemy. So, evoking the Earth domain can result in healing (by channeling life energy) whereas conjuring Earth would create plants.



▽ EVOKE

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☉ sky	lightning, thunder, sound
☾ sea	cold, wet, ice
⚔ forge	heat, lodestones
⚓ earth	poison, life force
★ night	fear, entropy, death energy

THE SCHOOL OF SUMMONING



The use of Magic to summon and control living (and undead) things is called Summoning.

SUMMONING is the art of calling forth creatures and elementals to do a wizard's bidding. Each domain has thrall over a different class of elemental, creature, and demon. The opposite of Summoning is Banishing or Exorcism, which is easier to do than summoning.

LESSER SUMMONS

ALVOKI

☉ sky	birds, insects, flying things
☪ sea	fish, sea life
⬠ forge	charm-like effects
▲ earth	most animals
★ night	ghosts, the undead

GREATER SUMMONS

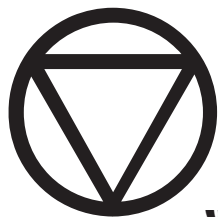
ALVOKI

☉ sky	djinns and cold demons
☪ sea	undines and water devils
⬠ forge	ifrits and anvil demons
▲ earth	nymphs and rock devils
★ night	shadows and void things

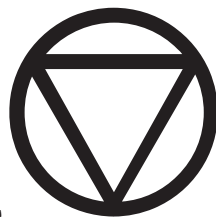
A CURIOUS GRIMOIRE







A CURIOUS GRIMOIRE



BEING AN INTRODUCTION TO THE
WORLD OF SPELLS AND ITEMS OF POWER

Perhaps you need a little help with ideas of how to use Magic in your game. Maybe you are trying to translate some old materials into a Mazes game and need some direction. Either way, here are some classic “spells” and “magic items” from other fantasy games – expressed in **MAZES**.

The spells, items, and magical information presented herein is shown in Arcane Order (domain, school, form). An index follows.

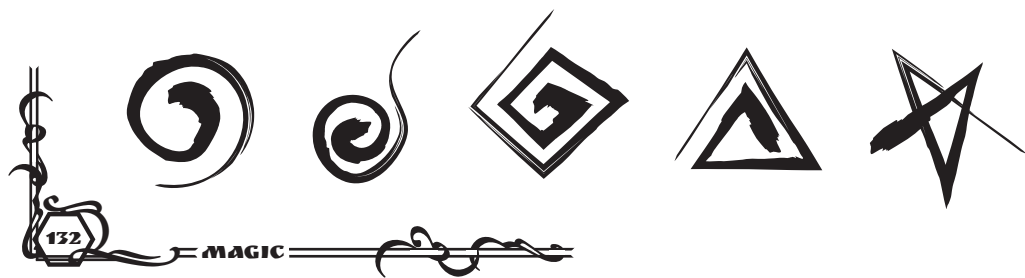
☯ *Flight (Spell) or Ring of Flying (Item) or Djinni Tornado (Lineage)* conjunction, sky domain

The aeromancer’s core discipline. They say that masters of the White College have no doors on the first three floors of their towers – that all students must learn to fly up to the door to enter. Focusing on the purity of the **SKY DOMAIN**, the mystic channels the raw power of flight – rising up into the air seemingly floating on nothing.

Flying is also a common spell like effect granted by Magic Lineages that hail from the elemental realms of **SKY** (like the Djinni). Magic items that grant flying – such as **BOOTS** of the **SEVEN WINDS**, or a **RING** of **FLYING** are always objects of great value.

☯ *Conjure Wind (Spell)* conjunction, sky domain

The classical spell of conjuring winds uses a tin whistle and a sack sewed from the sail of a ship. The incantation calls up a powerful and directed wind that is strong enough to move a ship, knock an enemy from a wall, and clear a room of a foul mist.



☉ *Onkloro's Weatherproofing (Spell)*
abjuration, sky domain

A simple incantation cast into a tin button that is then sewn onto a coat, hat, or cloth – this abjuration repels water making an object effectively waterproof.

☉ *Fly on the Wall (Spell) or Horn of Eavesdropping (Item)*
illumination or summoning, sky domain

Listening in on a conversation from far away is a simple magic for Sky Domain – as sound travels through the wind. You may have a Magic Item that allows you to hear conversations in the next room, or perhaps you cast a spell that allows you to hear through a fly that is buzzing at the window.

☉ *Haunting Song (Spell)*
feign, sky domain

Using their magic, the sorcerer traps a song on the wind and stores it in a bottle or in a room. The eerie sound remains – with no source.

☉ *Thunderclap (Spell)*
evocation, sky domain

With a boom and crack, the sound of a thunder wave bursts from the clapped hands of the magician – the massive sound is enough to knock over opponents and deafen them for a few minutes.

☉ *See Invisible (Spell) or Glasses of True Seeing (Item)*
divination, sky domain

A narrow use cantrip – being able to see invisible objects (whether they are ghostly emanations or magically shrouded doors) is a great tool when you need it. Many mages have incorporated that ability into their glasses or into a magnifying lens.

☉ *Instill Memory (Spell)*
enchantment, sky domain

Air Mages can enchant an object to hold a message, or to hold (or erase) a memory. This is a great tool to preserve the history of a place or people (like the crystals of Kal-El), or to provide much needed information on how to perform complex rituals.

☯ *Ravensdeath Swarm (Spell)*
summoning, conjuration, sky domain

The Ravensdeath Swarm is a combination of Sky Magic and the darkest forms of conjuration and summoning. Using the feathers of dead ravens tied with tin wire and wrapped around a candle made of purest beeswax and the rendered fat from a frost drake – this incantation unleashes a nightmare flock of venomous ravens. The swarm covers a target in a spiral of pecking and stinging, leaving their prey **TIRED**, as well as dealing **DAMAGE**.

☯ *Crystal Waters (Spell) or a Decanter of the Endless Spring (Item)*
conjuration, sea domain

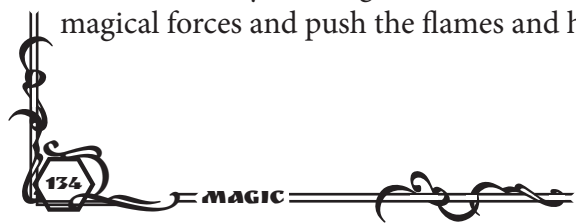
Perhaps the single most important spell in a hydromancer's training is the essential Crystal Waters cantrip. The goal is to conjure pure, clear, running water from a stone or other material. One of the core practices in training a true Blue Mage is the creation of a Goblet of Eternal Water.

☯ *Rainmaking (Spell or Item)*
conjuration, sea domain

While creating drinking water from nothing is a core ability – the most practical application of conjuring water is to bring rain to crops or battlefields. Channeling at this scale, generally requires that the blue mage have a strong focus (such as a sky shark's spine made into a staff) or a crystal vial of treated mercury. Making rain is a dangerous business, as the law of conservation is always alive in the world of magic – and to make it rain here means that the water is coming from somewhere else...

☯ *Fire Ward (Spell, Linage, Item)*
abjuration, sea domain

Fire Wards drawn to protect houses are a quick and easy way for a hydromancer to make some coin while traveling (especially in closely packed towns). The real strength is to be able to create a Fire Ward on the fly to protect yourself from flames – usually creating a circle above and on the ground to balance out the magical forces and push the flames and heat away.



☪ *Resting Touch* (Spell, Lineage)
evocation, abjuration, sea domain

Channeling the power of the sea into an item (either evoking the power directly or abjuring the forge) results in ferrous metals rusting and others oxidizing and aging. A powerful effect against plate-mailed knights and others that lean heavily on metal weapons. Because of this spell, Blacksmiths tend to mistrust Blue Mages since with a word they could split their precious anvils.

☪ *Discern the Past* (Spell, Lineage) or *Hourglass of Long Ago* (Item)
divination, sea domain

Mostly a ritual, a few lineages and artifacts have the gifts of Past Sight (retrocognition). The Sea washes away the sand, like the Power of Time washes away the Past. But there is an echo. A powerful memory mage can summon up visions of what occurred in a place. When the ability is something inherent to the individual – it often expresses itself violently when the universe feels that you need to know what happened in a place.

☪ *Freshen* (Spell) or *Candle of Repose* (Item)
feign, sea domain

A simple cantrip removes (or at least masks) noxious odors and smells. Using the power of the Sea to control taste and smell, this easy magic makes even the most musty and rancid of dungeon chambers palatable. Cast into a candle or a cup of dried flowers, the magic can be used to permanently provide a pleasant-smelling respite.

☪ *Crippling Cold* (Spell)
evocation, enchantment(hex), sea domain

Cold is the harshest of the sea's weapons, and Blue Mages bend it into an attack. Waves of crippling cold, cause the victim to not only suffer damage from the icy attack, but they are slowed and prone to fall (dealing both damage and hexing their agility and movement).

☪ *Block of Ice (Spell)*
conjunction, evocation, sea domain

A favorite among the Hydromancers of the South Seas, with a sweeping gesture and a closed fist – water flies around a target and freezes into a block of ice. A block of ice is an easy way to hold weak and strong foes alike.

☪ *Hidrargo's Knives (Spell) or Ring of Icy Death (Item)*
evocation, sea domain

Flechettes made of tiny icicles rain from the caster's outstretched palm – turning the moisture in the air into deadly knives. The spell is generally referred to as Hidrargo's Knives as that fabled sorcerer is said to have cast the knives to defeat an army of invading goblins – turning the simple attack spell into a weapon of mass destruction.

☪ *Fleetness of Mercury (Spell, Lineage) or Many League Boots (item)*
enchantment, sea domain

Sea Magic rules the realm of movement – speed, agility, dexterity. Using Sea Magic to provide speed and maneuverability is a standard technique and is often used as part of the enchanting of items. Casting fleetness into seed pearls sewn into the linings of cloaks or as decoration on leather boots is a common method. Creatures with strong Sea Domain lineages are often capable of swimming, running, and jumping at great speed and distances.

☪ *Summon Ridgeback Shark (Spell) or Drums of the Shark (Item)*
summoning, sea domain

Among all of the creatures that can be summoned with mastery of the sea domain, the most weaponized is the Ridgeback Shark. A true alpha-predator, the Ridgeback Shark is an armored, flesh rending monstrosity that will attack anything that gets near its gleaming jaws.

 Summon Water Wyrđ (Spell) or Water Wyrđ Gem Seeds (Item)
summoning, sea domain

The truly great Sea Mages realize that there are remnants of the Sea everywhere – and while to Maze bound mages it would seem that they would be cut off from most Sea Monsters – things like Water Wyrds can be lying in any pool. The wisest of Sea Mages ensure this by bringing along Water Wyrđ seeds (glass jewels filled with arcane mercury).

 Create Flaming Sword (Spell)
conjunction, forge domain

With a snap of the wrist, the red mage turns a slug of iron and hematite crystal into a blazing longsword. Besides being an effective way of never finding oneself unarmed, a Flaming Sword conjunction is a sight to send fear (rightfully so) into the hearts of many creatures. The blade will ultimately be consumed by the flames, rendering it a slag of metal and salt. Still, it will stay aflame and sharp for many hours, giving off little heat except along its blade edge, and providing light as a torch for a few hours.

 Wall of Fire (Spell) or Magic Pyre (Spell)
conjunction, forge domain

A classic of the Pyromantic style – conjuring heaps of flames which are either aligned into a straight line or a bonfire configuration. Unlike setting a fire with magic (a simple Roll for a Red Mage), this spell produces an explosion of flame that throws off strong heat and acts as a solid barrier. Anything caught in the flames takes damage every round they stay in it.

 Fireball (Spell) or Wand of Fireballs (Weapon)
conjunction, evocation, forge domain

The mainstay of War Mages and other fighter types. The fireball – either cast from a scroll or through a wand or staff is the most classic attack. Unlike the standard fireball (see Mundane Magic), this represents the true destructive power of the fireball – a hurling meteor of pure flame and heat that spirals through the air and detonates in a large explosion.

◈ *Breathe Fire (Spell or Lineage)*
conjunction, evocation, forge domain

Not all magic fire comes in the form of fireballs, fire-breathing is a tried-and-true classic. Fire Breath is often tied to a lineage (Ifrits, Fire Hounds) or to a bloodline (sorcerers with dragons' blood).

◈ *Crack of Doom (Spell) or Earthsplitter and Earthshaker, Axe and Hammer of the Dead Dwarf Lords (Weapon)*
abjuration, forge domain

Forge magic rules over the domain of earth and wood. An Axe enchanted with ancient Dwarven Runes, or a spell chanted in the crisp syllables of pyromancy can reave through stone like it was wood, and wood like it was water. Massive cracks and wilting grass are the sign of its passing. It has been ages since the Dwarves were alive, but some of their magic items survive. Axes, swords, and hammers covered in fire runes of abjuration are highly prized.

◈ *Circle of Protection against Fey (Spell or Item)*
abjuration, forge domain

Fey Creatures, especially Forest Fey and Underearth Fey, dislike the touch of cold iron. Iron naturally seeks to disrupt Earth Magic. An Abjurer can form a circle of salt, iron shavings, chalk, and ash that will keep a fey creature out (or trap it within). Certain runes and sigils will make it so that the circle can't be upset by natural conditions, so that it can only be broken from the inside (protection circle), or the outside (circle of holding).

◈ *Farseeing (Spell) or Crystal Orb (Item)*
divination, forge domain

Creating a smooth, clear ball of glass requires the finest sand, and the hottest of flames. Pondering a pure crystal orb, a wizard can scry long distances, communicate with other mages, and of course spy on their enemies. During the Witch Wars, complex networks of Scrying Crystals allowed the Witch Kings to hold together a vast empire by communicating from the tops of their towers.

 Phantasmal Image (Spell)
feign, forge domain

The core of the illusionist's art. The Phantasmal Image bends light and haze into a form that looks like a real thing but is merely a reflection of a dream in the eye of the illusionist. Phantasmal Images are easier to cast when a mage knows the subject well, and sketches made with charcoal ash pencils are common material components, as are metallic paints for color and motion.

 Fairy Geld (Spell or Lineage)
feign, conjuration, forge domain

Originally a trick of fey creatures, Fey Gold or Fairy Geld, is a simple mix of conjurations and illusions of the red wizard. A handful of rocks is made to look and feel like gold coins. The illusion even carrying to their weight. The seeming doesn't last more than a day, but many an Innkeeper has been swindled with fey coins, and many forest spirits have struck bargains with hunters for pots of gold that later turned out to be pots full of shiny river stones.

 Melt Arms and Armor (Spell)
evocation, forge domain

As part of any training in the Red Arts, a sorcerer will spend time learning about metal from a blacksmith or master mage. Part of that training is to understand how fire and heat interact with metal. With that knowledge a wizard can use their art to undo metal work – melting armor, blunting swords, and fusing hammers together.

 Light as a Feather, Heavy as Steel (Spell)
evocation, forge domain

Alchemists working with metal mages have come to understand that Forge Magic controls the intrinsic weight of objects. It is a simple evocation to make a suit of armor light, or a feather heavy – by pulling and moving the “weight” from one object to another.

◈ *Warmth (Spell) or Corin's Marvelous Tent (Item)*
evocation, enchantment, forge domain

Like mastering weight, a red mage understands that warmth can be pulled from the very air, from the ground, and from stone. This makes it possible to survive without equipment in some environments. Where more is needed, it is not uncommon to see an enchantment placed into a canvas tent. The tent is prepared with a wash of crystal dust and arsenic and left to bleach under the strong rays of the suns. Before use, the tent is stitched with runes that hold and circulate the heat, making a lightweight shelter that stays dry, warm, and glows slightly.

◈ *Flames of Passion (Spell)*
enchantment, summoning, forge domain

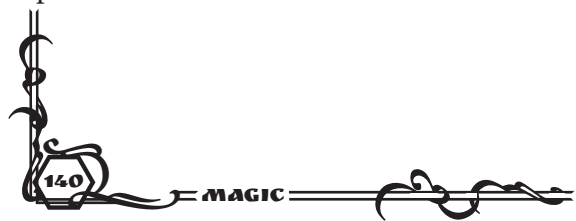
Often overlooked abilities of the Forge Domain are passion, anger, and other “hot” emotions. With a little coaxing, an enchanter or illusionist can start blood boiling over, resulting in a passionate response (romantic or lustful feelings, heated debate, anger, rage, etc.).

◈ *Rune of Protection (Spell) or Amulet of Protection (Item)*
enchantment, hex, forge domain

Most pyromancers and war mages still use the dwarven method of runic inscription. Casting the rune by inscribing it onto the air with a magical fire or cutting it into an amulet or breastplate are both effective. The rune causes any trying to strike at the caster or holder to suffer impaired fighting skill (hexing the Blades Roll or providing advantage to the save). Amulets of Protection are a hugely in demand form of protection and armor for those who are not warriors used to wearing heavy metal.

◈ *Love Charm (Item) or Siren's Song (Lineage)*
summoning, forge domain

Similar to a Charm Person spell, a Love Charm or Siren Song is different in that it attempts to tie two people together. The casting is similar to summoning, but ultimately it requires that the charmed submit to a kiss – which makes the charm permanent.



Charm Person (Spell) *summoning, forge domain*

As classic as Phantasmal Image, Charm Person is one of the reasons that common folk distrust magic users. Charm Person isn't mind control – it's more like a friendliness spell. When a wizard casts Charm, they are using the same forms of magic that diabolists use to summon demons but instead they're trying to summon a person. The more the caster knows about the person, the easier the casting is. Having the person present or having a lock of their hair is required – but burning a graven image of them, crafting a likeness with a stuffed “guy”, or boiling a possession in acid are all ways to make a Charm more potent. Charm spells don't last long but during that time the charmed are very susceptible to your wishes as if they were being asked to do something by a very close friend.

Palisade (spell) *conjuration, earth domain*

With a rising fist gesture, the geomancer pulls earth and root up into a spiky tree trunk wall. These palisade walls will stand without the mage's assistance – providing cover and protection.

Jericho's Horn (spell, item) *conjuration, abjuration, earth domain*

Generally constructed into a horn, Jericho's call is a well-known invocation to tear walls of stone and earth down. Earthen walls include mud, wood, brick, thatch, and stone – but this doesn't extend to walls that are reinforced with or made of metal (one of the reasons that fortification walls often incorporate iron spears and old horseshoes).

Entangling Vines (spell) *conjuration, earth domain*

Reaching out into nearby plants, the Green Mage causes regular vines and undergrowth to quickly grow and move – entangling the feet of everyone in the area. Moving through an entangled area is a hazard that requires a **BOOTS SAVE**, or the character gets pulled to the ground, where the vines will attempt to hold them fast.



△ *Ghost Ward* (spell, item)
abjuration, earth domain

Using the shining power of life energy, a Green Mage or Abjurer can create a rune that is invisible to normal sight but burns bright under undead and ghost sight. These Ghost Wards are often built into tomb walls and battlefield graves, where the unrequited and angry dead may be found. When a spirit or undead creature comes in contact with a ghost ward they burn like fire.

△ *Charm against Fear* (item)
abjuration, earth domain

Most charms against fear start with a penny – a common source of copper. The copper disc is hammered smooth, and inscribed with runes saying, “Earth shuts away the Night”, a mage axiom and incantation of the power of Earth over Night. The amulet is then sewn into a leather necklace or bracelet or worked into a cloak or hat. The wearer is protected against magical fears and has advantage on any rolls to keep themselves calm.

△ *Read the Heart* (lineage, spell)
divination, earth domain

The Earth domain, of all the domains, is the least concerned with divination, the only sphere it affects is emotion. A witch’s hex, “reading the heart” is a common name for the practice or lineage that has the ability to perceive emotions truly – the empathy.

△ *Walking on Your Grave* (spell)
feign, earth domain

Really more of a simple cantrip, the Walking on Your Grave spell is an illusion of touch – the feeling of a spider crossing your shoulders, or a faint touch on the shoulder. The overall effect is eerie and strange and is often used by druids to enhance the eeriness of their groves.

△ *Mask of the Conclave* (item)
feign, earth domain

The Druids of the old world would shield their faces with masks of wood and bone; often faceless save eye holes or formed into intricate animal faces. These masks were always worn when the druids met in conference, thus the name Conclave Mask. A Conclave Mask guards and controls the wearer's emotions – allowing them to make cold and rational decisions, even when they have a raging heart.

△ *Cobrastrike* (spell, lineage) or *Staff of the King Cobra* (Item)
evocation, earth domain

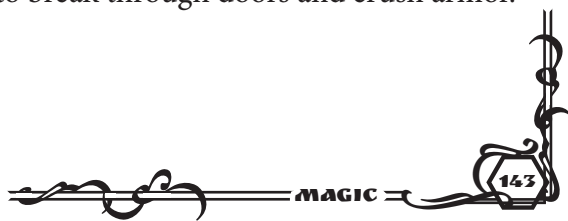
A powerful attack form – whether it is a cloud of poisonous green breath, giant phantasmal snake, or growing fangs. The Cobrastrike is more than just a damage spell – it leeches the victim's strength, causing them to take the **POISONED** Condition.

△ *Blessings of the Fertile Earth* (spell, lineage) or *Idol of the Black Dirt God* (item)
evocation, earth domain

Well before there were wizards, earth domain adepts were using the power of the green to bring life to ailing crops, and to aid in planting and harvest. The blessings of the fertile earth can be prayers to nature gods, cast into idols that are planted with crops, or the songs and spells of a witch who's working to keep plant matter healthy and growing.

△ *Strength of the Mountain* (spell) or *Belt of Hart Strength* (item)
enchantment, earth domain

The Green Mage is often called on to aid the making of magic weapons and especially armor, to add the strength of the earth to the casting. This enchantment is often made into wide wyvern leather belts with copper studs or hammered into bracers or gloves. The recipient has advantage in all Strength contests, being magically imbued with more than human strength. When runed to a weapon, the strike of the item can be so powerful as to break through doors and crush armor.



△ *Giant's Gift (spell) or a Potion of Giant Size (item)*
enchantment, evocation, earth domain

Earth magic is concerned not only with growing but with size. Harnessing its raw power and the earth's desire to grow, a mage can enlarge a warrior to giant proportions – giving them giant strength, giant power, and unfortunately a giant's slowness. Be careful with this incantation, the temporary growth cannot grow metal – only natural fabrics, leather, and wood.

△ *Hex of Weakness (spell)*
enchantment, earth domain

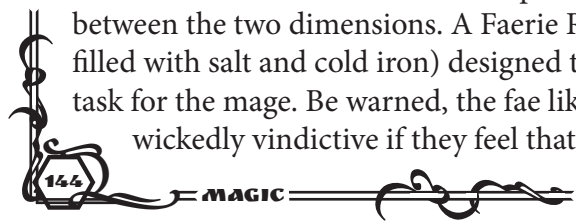
A breathy chanted word or the stare of an evil eye – weakness is caused by hexing strength – sapping the life force and causing Disadvantage on **BONES** rolls. The evil eye is something that the sickly fear, as those that are suffering from a debilitating condition know that weakness is the first step on the path towards death.

△ *Summon Beast (spell, lineage)*
summoning, earth domain

Nearly all land animals are controlled by Earth Magic, making animal summoning a common green spell target. Summoned animals will not act against their natures – but when summoned they are controlled by the caster allowing them to act with more direction and intelligence. Summoning large predators as attackers works because these animals (tigers, bears, honey badgers) are often snarling for a fight. Before summoning an animal, the geomancer should know something of its nature and could have a token of the animal to concentrate on or place into a summoning circle; such as a skull, bone, horn, claw, or a knot made from its fur or hair.

△ *Faerie Ring (item) or Sidhe Step (lineage)*
summoning, earth domain

Besides animals, Earth Magic is the lineage of the fair folk – the elves of old and the fairies and gremlins of today. By constructing a ring of 13 toadstools and copper coins, an earth caster can open a door to the Fae Realm – allowing commerce to occur. For some, this power is innate, and manifests as “stepping” between the two dimensions. A Faerie Ring can also be used as a trap (when filled with salt and cold iron) designed to convince a fae creature to perform a task for the mage. Be warned, the fae like to trade favors and gifts, but are wickedly vindictive if they feel that they were trapped or cheated.



✧ *Veil of Night (Spell) or Blindness (Spell)*
conjunction, enchantment, night domain

A simple yet effective use of Night Magic is to conjure forth shadows to either conceal yourself or something else (a veil of night) or to draw those shadows across a subject's vision (blindness).

✧ *Flying Skull (Spell) or The Spear of Unearthly Torments (Weapon)*
conjunction, night domain

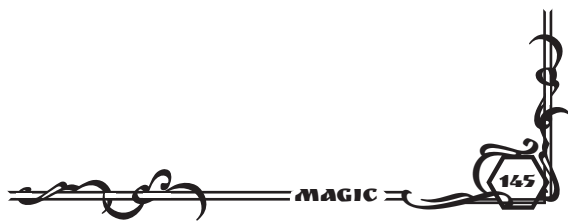
By pouring soul magic into a weapon (or rune binding a ghost to a spear or piercing weapon) a necromancer can inflict wounds that do not heal properly – being seared by entropic energies. Sometimes, this comes in the form of a Ghosthammer, or Flying Skull missile made from pure soul energy.

✧ *Speak with the Dead (Spell) or Talking Witchboard (Item)*
conjunction, night domain

Binding a soul to this plane is the original work of the necromancer. The Black Mage will usually use a skull or jawbone to hold a ghost, though some prefer to bind the magic into a talking board. Through either method – the ghosts of the recently departed (or ghosts that are bound to an area) can be questioned. This method of taking with the dead is simple – but does not require that the ghosts speak true (unlike a summoning).

✧ *Ward Against Lightning (Spell) or Amulet of Black Iron (Item)*
abjuration, night domain

As the Night swallows the Sky, so does Night Magic ward against Lightning and Thunder. Small amulets of black iron are highly valued by those who live in storm prone areas – as these luck charms help to avoid lightning strikes and perilous winds. A Ward Against Lightning will protect a spellcaster and their companions from Lightning Based attacks.



✧ *Circle of Owls (Spell)*
abjuration, night domain

An inscription in salt and mouse blood will summon ghost owls to patrol a large area, keeping it free of birds and insects.

✧ *Dream Quest (Spell) or an Illuminated Tarot Deck (Item)*
divination, night domain

Divining the future is at best a chaotic proposition, and at worst a risky dance with prophecy. Very good diviners can use the power of night to sail the sea of dreams, fishing up strange symbols and possible answers to their questions. Most fortune tellers dabble in Night Magic or use true or ensorcelled Tarot Decks for this purpose. These decks are illuminated with paints made from lead and antimony to harness and control the inherent night in their manufacture.

✧ *Aura of False Magics (Spell)*
feign, night domain

All magic leaves a trace, but Night Magic can erase or change those subtle auras and twisting trails. A black wizard that wants to shield cursed items can create counterfeit auras.

✧ *Muddy the Water (Spell) or Broken Lifeline (Lineage)*
feign, night domain

Some beings can't be seen with Magic – their past and future shatters the fortune-teller's arts. These creatures have broken lifelines or shadowy auras – a competent night mage can muddle these waters for anyone – leaving ripples in the dream sea around a person, place, or thing.

✧ *Incite Fear (Spell) or Skull of Panic (Item) or Whispers of Damnation (Lineage)*
evocation, night domain

By spell, item, or blood – fear is a potent weapon. Using black magic to incite fear will cause creatures to flee or huddle in panic. The mind is easy to play tricks on and pouring magic into nightmare holes can cause even the most stalwart of knights to shiver in their armor. While afraid, everything is hard to do, until you can free yourself from the pulse pounding terror.

✧ *Wither (Spell)*
evocation, night domain

Speeding up the power of entropy is one of the most feared uses of Night Magic. Whether or not the black sorcerer is causing crops to wither, bone to harden, or flesh to wrinkle and die – all of it induces fear and hatred. A withering touch, a curse attack, or a blight – using the raw power of death will hurt your enemies and cause all to fear you.

✧ *The Whisper of Coup de Grâce (Spell) or the Scythe of Death's Door (Weapon)*
evocation, night domain

While learning to master death energy, an apprentice of the dark arts will sit by the bedside of aging people and pets to listen to their last words. The secret breath of Death that falls and causes life to be freed from the body is a guarded secret – and a powerful burden. Speaking the whisper will cause anything on **DEATH'S DOOR** to instantly die, and a few ages have learned to inscribe this into a leaden rune that can be embedded in weapons which are uncanny at taking a last breath.

✧ *The Evil Eye (Lineage) or Hex of Unluck (Spell)*
enchantment, night domain

Under the auspice of a night master, a creature can be refused their Class and Crown bonus when they are making a roll – this usually appears to be just bad luck, unless someone with uncanny sight can see that they have been hexed with the Evil Eye.

✧ *Dreamveil (Item) or Night's Ambition (Spell)*
enchantment, night domain

A sheet of thin, fine cloth is prepared in a bath of lead and antimony – and left to capture the rays of the first night of the waxing moon. This Dreamsilk can be used to make a veil that will calm sleeplessness, allow for vivid dreaming, or communication via sleep to others. When cast as a spell, the Night's Ambition is a way of controlling the future, by instilling in a subject (ofttimes the caster) a dream that drives their waking hours.



✧ *Circlet of Awareness (Item) or an Owl Fetish (Item)*
enchantment, night domain

A thin circlet of lead with a gemstone eye, or a netsuke or statuette of an owl, is the most common way this enchantment is created. Worn on the head, or perched in a room, the enchanted object provides advantage to all awareness checks – creating an area of heightened security and scrutiny. The enchantment clears away illusions and heightens quiet sounds.

✧ *Raise Skeletons (Spell)*
summoning, night domain

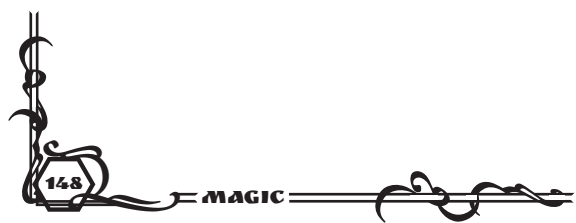
The core of the combat necromancer's art is summoning and binding skeletons to your will. Skeletal warriors make great servants having no needs, other than death energy, and no desires. They will guard a tomb until they fade into dust or patrol a passageway until their bones break and shatter.

✧ *Summon Wraith (Spell)*
summoning, night domain

All undead are at the mercy of the summoning power of the black witch, but none are so terrible as the dread wraith. A vicious hole in the umbral space between living and death – the wraith is a hunger that cannot be sated. Guard and ward thyself well if summoning a wraith. It cannot be reasoned with; it cannot be controlled – merely brought into existence and bound to a place. Wraiths are a high-risk, high-power gamble for guardian spirits.

✧ *Call the Ghosts of this Place to Heed (Spell)*
summoning, night domain

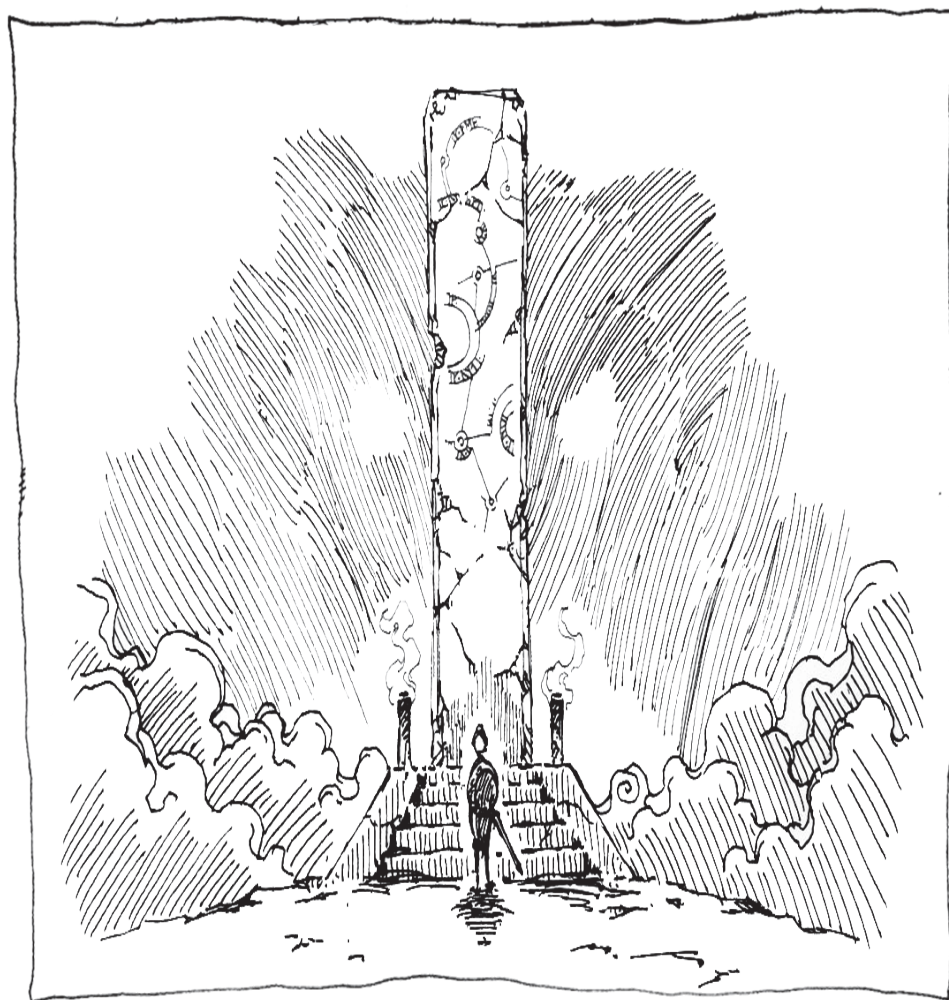
More than speaking with the dead, calling the ghosts to heed is about summoning a ghost proper to do your bidding. This is usually done with a seance held around a circle of salt, begonias, and candle wax. A mirror placed in the center of the circle acts as a conduit, allowing the ghost to form properly from the inverted mirror that is the spirit world. This type of summoning requires that the ghost be bound to a place. The spirits of the recent dead, who will soon move on to the next world, won't do.



✧ *True Exorcism (Spell)*

summoning, abjuration, night domain

A True Exorcism is an act that severs the binding of a ghost, demon, or other malevolent entity from the place they are bound to. This act varies from place to place – as it is usually performed by the religious. When performed by a mage, though, the caster will utilize magic circles, enchanted candles, and a lead hilted knife with a brass and antimony blade. The blade is used to cut the silver thread that binds the monster to this plane – once it can be seen by the caster (which may take magic, cajoling, or cunning to get the beast to reveal itself).



CONJURATION

Block of Ice
Breathe Fire
Conjure Wind
Create Flaming Sword
Crystal Waters
Entangling Vines
Fairy Geld
Fireball
Flight
Flying Skull
Jericho's Horn
Magic Pyre
Palisade
Rainmaking
Ravensdeath Swarm
Speak with the Dead
Veil of Night
Wall of Fire

ABJURATION

Charm against Fear
Circle of Owls
Circle of Protection against Fey
Crack of Doom
Fire Ward
Ghost Ward
Jericho's Horn
Onklino's Weatherproofing
Rusting Touch
True Exorcism
Ward Against Lightning

DIVINATION

Discern the Past
Dream Quest
Farseeing
Read the Heart
See Invisible

FEIGN

Aura of False Magics
Fairy Geld
Freshen
Haunting Song
Muddy the Water
Phantasmal Image
Walking on Your Grave

ENCHANTMENT

Blindness
Crippling Cold
Flames of Passion
Fleetness of Mercury
Giant's Gift
Hex of Unluck
Hex of Weakness
Instill Memory
Night's Ambition
Rune of Protection
Strength of the Mountain

EVOCATION

Blessings of the Fertile Earth
Block of Ice
Breathe Fire
Crippling Cold
Fireball
Giant's Gift
Hidrargo's Knives
Incite Fear
Light as a Feather, Heavy as Steel
Melt Arms and Armor
Rusting Touch
Thunderclap
Warmth
Whisper of Coup de Grâce
Wither

SUMMONING

Call the Ghosts to Heed
Charm Person
Faerie Ring
Flames of Passion
Fly on the Wall
Raise Skeletons
Ravensdeath Swarm
Summon Beast
Summon Ridgeback Shark
Summon Water Wyrld
Summon Wraith
True Exorcism

Breathe Fire
Broken Lifeline
Cobrastrike
Djinni Tornado
Fleetness of Mercury
Read the Heart
Rusting Touch
Sidhe Step
Siren's Song
Summon Beast
The Evil Eye
Whispers of Damnation

SKY

Conjure Wind
Flight
Fly on the Wall
Haunting Song
Instill Memory
Onklino's Weatherproofing
Ravensdeath Swarm
See Invisible
Thunderclap

SEA

Block of Ice
Crippling Cold
Crystal Waters
Discern the Past
Fire Ward
Fleetness of Mercury
Freshen
Hidrargo's Knives
Rainmaking
Rusting Touch
Summon Ridgeback Shark
Summon Water Wyrđ

EARTH

Blessings of the Fertile Earth
Charm against Fear
Cobrastrike
Entangling Vines
Ghost Ward
Giant's Gift
Hex of Weakness
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Palisade
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Strength of the Mountain
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FORGE

Breathe Fire
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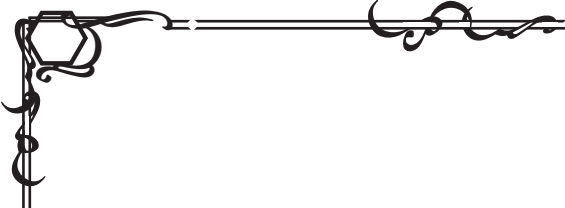
NIGHT

Aura of False Magics
 Blindness
 Call the Ghosts to Heed
 Circle of Owls
 Dream Quest
 Flying Skull
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 Wither

Amulet of Protection
 Amulet of Black Iron
 Belt of Hart Strength
 Candle of Repose
 Circlet of Awareness
 Corin's Marvelous Tent
 Crystal Orb
 Decanter of the Endless Spring
 Dreamveil
 Drums of Shark Summoning
 Glasses of True Seeing
 Horn of Eavesdropping
 Hourglass of Long Ago
 Idol of the Black Dirt God
 Illuminated Tarot Deck
 Jericho's Horn
 Love Charm
 Many League Boots
 Mask of the Conclave
 Owl Fetish
 Potion of Giant Size
 Ring of Flying
 Skull of Panic
 Talking Witchboard
 Water Wyrd Gemseeds

WEAPONS

Earthsplitter and Earthshaker
 Ring of Icy Death
 Scythe of Deaths Door
 Spear of Unearthly Torments
 Staff of the King Cobra
 Wand of Fireballs



interlude

The soothsayer gazed into her crystal ball. “You’ve had a great journey,” she began, her voice low and breathy. Izarro leaned in.

He had met diviners before, and patiently entertained their dubious tales. But this one, installed in a large tent at the Shambles in Harrowgate, was said to be the real deal. Indeed, around her neck she wore a pendant bearing a strange symbol that glowed magically against her skin. Catching Izarro looking at it, she smiled, and raised one eyebrow.

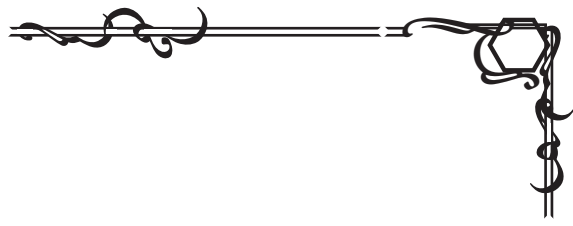
She asked, “You like my jewelry?”

Cheeks going red, Izarro dropped his eyes. “Ponder your orb,” he mumbled. The surface of the crystal ball reflected scudding clouds gathering on the horizon. By what magic did the woman part that curtain and gaze into the mists of time? He sighed. Perhaps he was just lonely, in need of purpose after days of drifting in the streets of this ghost-ridden town.

“You are lonely,” the woman said. Izarro nodded, and she continued. “Things have been difficult for you. An inner disturbance. A memory that won’t leave.”

“Yes,” Izarro said.

“And now you find yourself here, in search of a way out. Or a way in. You wander this place, compelled by its similarity to a home you once knew.” Her voice was hypnotic. “You are looking for answers, but you don’t know where to begin.”



He caught the flash of the assassin's sword in the curve of the crystal bar as it rose, and his training preceded him, muscle memory flashing as he drew his silver rapier and parried the dagger. His attacker stumbled backwards, then nimbly fell into a crouch.

"Who sent you?" Izarro demanded, extending his sword with bluster. Beyond the soothsayer's tent, he now saw, sat the figure. Again. Mounted upon a heavy, beaked aurox, whoever—or whatever—watched him from within a silk-shrouded hood. Had it sent this aggressor? Or was it simply not moved to intervene?

The attempt on his life failed, Izarro's attacker withdrew. But as she stepped backward, making to run, he grabbed at her short cape, fingers finding purchase in a moth-eaten hole. Old, desperate fabric. "Not so fast," Izarro said.

But the assassin pulled at the cord holding her cape secure and it released. She slipped from his hold like sand through the fortune-teller's hourglass. By the thrice damned Spider God, this time he would have an answer.

He threw the cape down and began to run, feet as agile and quiet as hers.

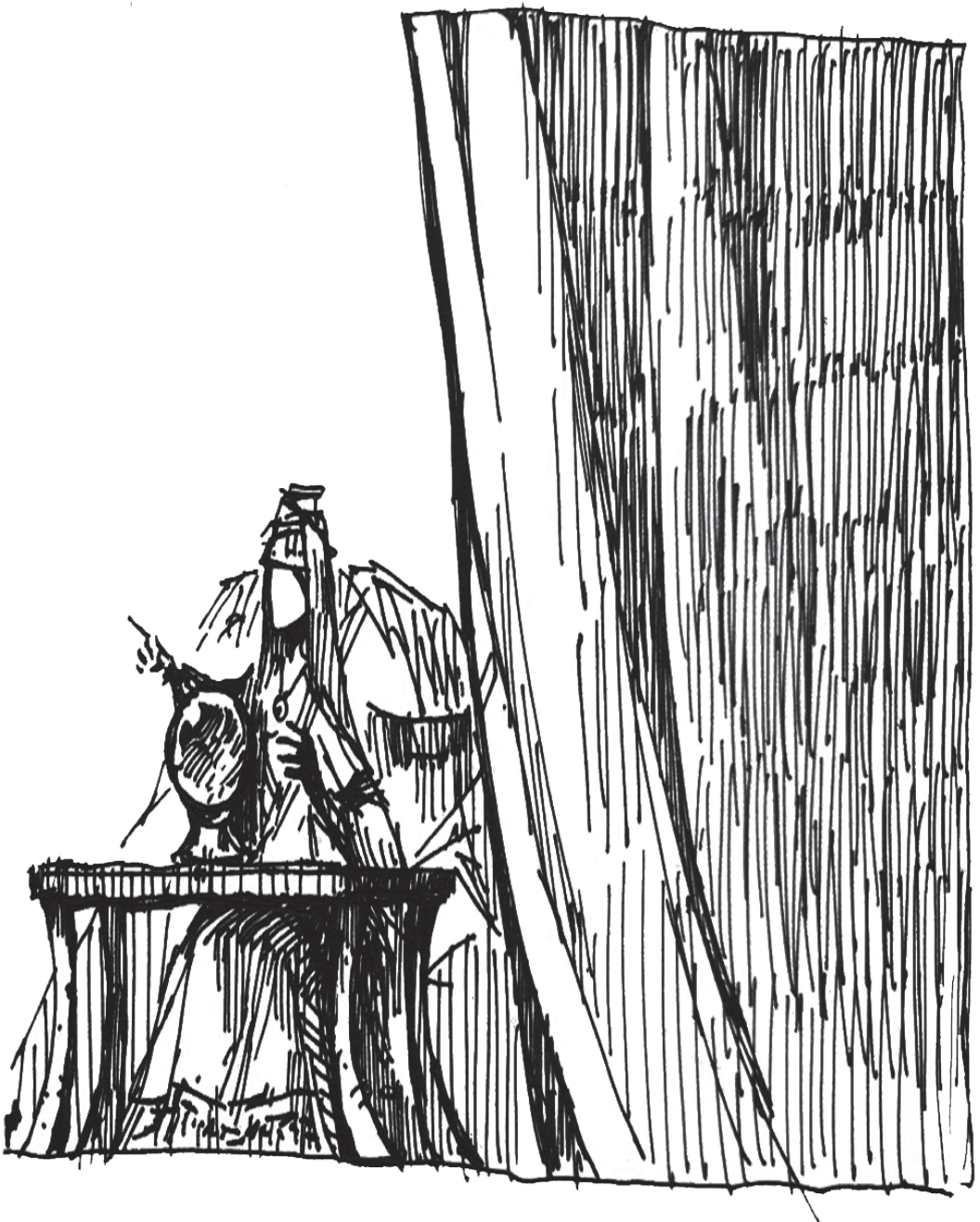


being rules for the running of games,
from maze creation to making rulings



~ Part Four ~

YOUR **FATE** IS IN MY **HANDS**



THE MAZE CONTROLLER

“I am the maze controller. Only I know the perilous course you are about to take. Your fate is in my hands!”

- Rona Jaffe, Mazes and Monsters

There isn't really a better name for this type of activity than “role playing game”, even if that term doesn't convey all that roleplaying is about. Many games and activities include role playing. And game, is it a game? While some of the things that it does are game like, others are collaborative, and very ungamelike.

But, **RPGS** – are different – even from other story heavy, narrative games, in that there is a storyteller who is both the helpmeet of the players and also their adversary. It is a unique position within all of entertainment – and as you have opened this rulebook, we assume that you want to join their ranks on this journey.

The player that runs the game in an **RPG** is called by many names. Originally, in the early 70s they were referred to as “referees” or “judges”, common terminology in large-scale military and historical war gaming. The Judge set things up and acted as an impartial overseer of the game rules. The referee was also impartial, interpreting and creating rulings.

But, the Dungeon Master, was different.

The **DM** didn't just set up a game – they built a “dungeon” – which they dared players to enter and defeat. The unexpected thing about this was that the Dungeon Master *wanted* you to beat their dungeon. They wanted it to be challenging and fun to accomplish, but it was supposed to be hard. It was supposed to be skill intensive, but surmountable.

Since those days, we have had a horde of games offer different takes on the referee – not only with different names, but different “core values” – the Game Master, the Storyteller, the Guide, the Mayor, Your Friend the Computer, the Facilitator, and a million others. We have fought and debated, destroyed, exiled, recreated, and rebuilt the role. Often, we have tried to remove it, or at least recast it – changing its form from adversary to facilitator and back again.

YOU ARE THE MAZE CONTROLLER

Some games recently started using **MC**, as in Master of Ceremonies, the emcee – to denote the player that nominally runs a roleplaying game. In Mazes, we call this pivotal and important player the **MAZE CONTROLLER**.

As the **MC**, you are the **MAZE CONTROLLER**, you have a unique role in the game – that of host, storyteller, and ultimately adversary to your players. You are the only one that knows the full extent of the perils that the adventurers will face.

As the **MC** (emcee) you are also the **MASTER OF CEREMONIES**. You control the flow and timing of the game. As the **MC** you are “in control” more than the other players. You control the speed of play. You get to decide when the story ends.

As the **MC**, you are a **MAZE CREATOR**. You need to create a maze, or get a maze that has already been made, for your players to explore. You control the world that the players are inhabiting. You are the maker of monsters and the creator of challenges.

As the **MC**, you should never be the **MAIN CHARACTER**. Your job is to let the other players take center stage – to be the protagonists of the story. When the Maze Controller “plays” too much, or focuses more on their pet characters, the other players will become bored.

As the **MC**, you are the **MINOR CHARACTERS**. You play the role of all of the minor characters that the players encounter. When a minor character threatens to become a **MAIN CHARACTER**, they should be handled by a player who is not the **MC**. In fact, **MAZES** is designed in a way that makes creating characters so easy that the players are encouraged to make lots of them.

As the **MC**, you are the **MONSTERS & CHALLENGES**. You are the voice and the brain of the monsters, hazards, traps, and challenges in your game – the adversaries that your players will come up against. As the Monsters, you should be trying to win. Trying to survive. As the Challenge, you should be a competitor trying to defeat the adventurers that have come into your maze.

EMULATING EXCITING TALES OF SWORDS & SORCERY

“But each of those claws had been reinforced with blocks of masonry, walls, watch points, miniature forts, connected to the main body with a maze of underground ways.”

– Andre Norton, *Gates of the Witch World*

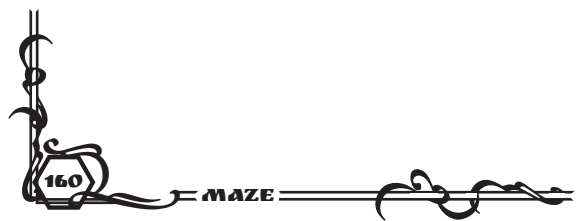
Each **polymorph** game tries to tell a different kind of story and create a different kind of play experience. **MAZES** emulates a very specific kind of story – one that we commonly refer to as “sword and sorcery.” Specifically, **MAZES** is a game about exploring and experiencing dungeons.

Sword and Sorcery is about wielding magic and weapons in exciting, exotic, deadly, and often violent adventures. These are the tales of exciting and powerful adventurers– that band together to explore, exploit, and exterminate the eerie.

Tales of Sword and Sorcery are fast paced. We always start in the middle of the action. We don’t have a long introduction to fantasy economics and the trade wars or the past. We have a sword. We are in danger. What do we do – now! Sword and Sorcery tales are visceral, they focus on what is happening, not on exposition. Don’t tell me the history of a statue, tell me what it looks like, and that acid is spraying from its eyes.

These worlds are fantastic and deadly. They were filled with weird beasts and strange languages, but mostly they were full of broken places. Tales of Sword and Sorcery don’t usually happen in the bright halls of the elves, they take place in the dark streets of worlds besieged by monsters and devastated by war. They take place underground in dark passageways, and we never do find out why some wizard stashed that gold here.

Their characters are often travelers, nomads, or outlaws on the run. Warriors and witches weary of a stagnant world, or outcasts pushed out to the borderlands and the dark places. Sword and Sorcery tales aren’t about gaining power and prestige, they’re about endless adventure. When a Sword and Sorcery character gains fame and fortune, they are bound to throw it all away – because their excitement springs purely from adventuring itself.



The stakes are personal – unlike High or Epic Fantasy where the stakes are often the fate of the world – these stories are about saving your skin and getting the treasure, winning the boy’s heart, or slaying the person that killed your tribe.

In the early days of roleplaying Sword and Sorcery was the default or assumed mode of fantasy. The stories were short – novellas and novelettes, not the hefty tomes of today’s fantasy. The creators of early **RPGs** were all steeped in these S & S stories. Your humble author has included some of their favorites in **PART VI**, On Swords and Sorcery.

But as a certain game concerning exploring dungeons and fighting dragons grew in popularity – fantasy itself shifted. Instead of **RPGs** based on S & S fiction – fantasy novels were growing out of **RPGs**. The characters changed from morally ambiguous swordswomen and sorceresses to farm boys who grow up to be gods – gaining in levels of power and ability to take on the world.

MAZES is a love letter to this old fiction, and to that old idea of roleplaying, a return to the root idea. A game of swords and sorceries, Mazes is a series of loosely connected short stories or novellas.

RULINGS OVER RULES

MAZES strives to be an elegant, rules lite system. Our goal is to make as few “rules” as possible; and let each rule organically and naturally grow out of the rules already defined and designed. When you add content to Mazes, it should seem like it was already there – it’s a specific implementation of the core toolkit that has already been laid out.

Like many games in the Old School style, Mazes is a “rulings” over “rules” game – which means that the rules are a set of guidelines to play, but that making a “ruling” at the table always takes precedence. There isn’t a rule for everything – by design. You can’t look in the index to find the answer to every edge case and position. As the Maze Controller you will sometimes have to make a “ruling” on how to do something or what happens. It is our goal to make arbitrating those rulings as easy possible. We hope that we are giving you all of the tools that you need to make quick, simple decisions.

Before you make up any new “rules” or add a “subsystem” try to see if one of the core Mazes tools can accomplish the job – the core rolls (action, save, and effect rolls); aspects and edges; vantage; stars and hearts; conditions; treasure; darkness (bright, torchlit, bleak); moments; hazards; danger; flashbacks; and resource spends.

NOVELLA STYLE PLAY

“It was a maze, but I was the owner and even the builder of that maze, with the print of my thumb on every passageway.”

– Gene Wolfe, *Book of the New Sun*

Before the explosion of fantasy into the mainstream, Sword and Sorcery was the province of pulps and novellas – short, hard-hitting novels. Where today’s fantasy series are 800-page doorstops that are part of sixteen book series, the original fantasy that inspired this genre were short novellas – the thin paperbacks with garish painted covers. Mazes stories emulate the lost feel of these pulp Sword and Sorcery books. The games are designed to be played episodically. Each session isn’t necessarily in chronological order – or even about the same characters.

Unlike most fantasy roleplaying games; **MAZES** *does not assume* that we are going to play a continuous campaign with the same characters and watch them rise in power from the first level. We may play a few connected stories with the same characters– or pulled from the same collection of characters – but playing the same character more than once is not necessary to truly appreciate Mazes.

With character creation this easy there is no reason not to make specific characters for the specific story that is going on; and there is no reason to avoid playing the character you like to play for some perceived “power” reasons– all the characters are equally powerful within their sphere.

Like a novella, a session of Mazes shouldn’t run too long, but should be a complete story. A novella doesn’t spend time “world building,” they are reactive and responsive. Show the world, don’t tell us about it. Get into the heart of the story and avoid side treks and subplots.

A session should last no more than 2 to 3 hours – the sweet spot for tabletop play. If you have all day on a Saturday, play two sessions.

Each game should be a single “tale” in the larger stories of the characters. Each tale should begin as close to the danger as possible and take us from the door to the climatic fight or puzzle.

As a Maze Controller, think of yourself as the writer of one of these garish pulp novellas. You want to create a story that will throw your characters into the heat of the moment, let them barely survive, and be worthy of an amazing cover painting.

Each “maze” that the characters undertake, should:

-  Have a clear, achievable goal.
-  What is stopping them from achieving that goal?
-  Start as close to the end as possible.
-  Have no more than 5 “rooms” or “scenes”.
-  Leave us wanting more.

STRIKING THE BALANCE BETWEEN ENEMY AND STORYTELLER

“It was hard to be the Maze Controller: you had to be sure the game wasn’t too easy, but you couldn’t let everyone get killed either.”

– Rona Jaffe, *Mazes and Monsters*

The core of the game is placing Hazards into the path of the players and seeing how they overcome them. As the Maze Controller, you are responsible for all of the Hazards that the adventurers will face.

A Hazard is anything the adventurers face that they have to overcome. Hazards are often monsters and traps, but they can be **mc** characters, environments, situations, or any danger that you can dream up. When you are creating modules or running games with **MAZES**, remember that you are not just the Storyteller, but also the Enemy. Part of the fun of “old school” gaming is that it is difficult, dangerous, and sometimes deadly. If the players know that behind every door is a Quantum Ogre and a healing potion, the game will quickly grow stale and become tiresome.

As a Storyteller, be an advocate for your players. Help them do cool things. Encourage them to spend Treasure, burn Stars, and lose Hearts and go for the gusto. Reward them with Advantaged rolls and Treasure when they do interesting things. Keep the story moving forward. Use the rules to keep the pace moving forward, forgive and forget minor issues in favor of the story.

As their Enemy, spend the Darkness to beat them down. Cheer when they get hit with massive swords and lose Hearts. Cackle with glee when they fall into acid pits. Make sure that you gather all of the Darkness you are owed and spend it to murder them! They can always make another character.

KEEPING IT WEIRD TALES

“...I crossed a fetid trail several times as I wandered in the maze, I never glimpsed the creature that left it.”

- Gene Wolf, Claw of the Conciliator

During the first heady age of fantasy roleplay, it was weird. Nothing was known. Everything couldn't be known. It was all brand new. Crazy creatures, strange cultures, magical effects – everything was just being invented. It was common to just slam two concepts together and see what happened. You have that power and freedom in Mazes. Swamp Sharks. Invisible Trees. Intelligent Fungus People. Floating Eyeballs. Soul Sucking Spellbooks. Rainbow Caped Mirror Soldiers!

Everything in the dungeon was new. No one had ever encountered a ferrous metal eating monster or a hybrid of bear and nocturnal fowl. What kind of a breath weapon a dragon had was a discovery – “holy crap, that dragon just breathed lightning at us!” And don't even get me started on the weird toys that were plopped onto the table and given silly names. Part of why those old adventures were interesting is that you never knew what could be dangerous. Playing to find out was at the core of the experience. The first time a treasure chest turned out to be a monster, everyone must have screamed. You have that power.

Keep things weird for your players. Never simply attack them with a bear when you could have an Owlbear, or a Firebear, or a Beartree. And... wait, is that an Acid Owlbear? Take two disparate animals and throw them together. Antlion anyone? How about... a Black Octopus Flying Eyeball Monster? Give it strange powers. Oh, the Squidpanther casts illusion magic? Seems great! Take something normal and put it where it doesn't belong; Sea Lions (that are like mermaid Lions), Winter Snakes (furry snakes), Walking Trees, Flaming Death Sparrows, Flying Skulls of the Ancient Enlightened Masters.

Make the players think about how to defeat or interact with whatever you send after them. Give it a weakness or a strength. Give it a thing it wants. Make the players discover it, not just reduce its hearts to zero.

One way to do this is to leave clues in your environment on how to defeat a monster or hazard, and until the party picks up on the special circumstance – their attacks are disadvantaged, or their effect is always 1. The Cyclopean Gascloud seems immune to your swords and arrows. Oh, you noticed the residue of salt around the green stain on the floor – and smear salt on your blades...

THE MAZE IS DARK AND DEADLY

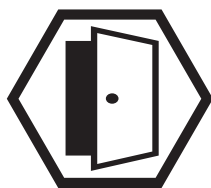
“They had entered the dragon’s defensive maze, and this was where she might choose to fight them...”

- Margaret Weis, *Mistress of Dragons*

When in doubt, bring on the action. Put the players in danger and ask them to solve the problems. Whenever there is a lag, take a Darkness and spend it to bring on the Dark. Get as close to the action at the start, and never take your foot off their throats. Push.

Hey. We need you to hear something that sounds a little crazy. It’s okay to murder the players’ characters. Part of the unwritten contract in an Old School game is the idea that a character can die – make sure that your players know this.

The hard, episodic nature of Mazes makes it particularly easy to kill a character and not get a bad feeling. Since Mazes can be played non-chronologically (remember it is not a level building game) you could even play a game with a “dead” character (this adventure happened before their death).



It’s exciting and fun to roll against **DEATH’S DOOR**. The fact that you can die makes it exciting when you roll, and you don’t die. Since there is no mechanical penalty to dying, it’s more socially acceptable to murder faces. In many games of this type when you die, you are losing personal resources (like experience or items) that make it harder for you to continue, but that doesn’t happen in Mazes.

THE GRIND OF BATTLE and **THE CHAIN OF CONDITIONS** exist to enforce this style of play. These are two rules that are easy to forget, but it is important to keep your foot on the gas here. Mazes adventures are headlong rushes into danger – characters will lose resources; they are supposed to. As a friend once said, you should play your **MAZES**’ characters like you stole them – fast and furious. You can try to minimize negative effects, but you are going to lose hearts anyway. Instead of looking to optimize actions and minimize spends, characters should be looking to maximize your effects.

THE GRIND OF BATTLE (losing a Heart on violent action) is needed to properly emulate the feel of sword and sorcery. The characters are not unstoppable killing machines – you are mere mortals caught in a dangerous world. Eventually, you will be worn down. Eventually you will fall. This rule is also necessary to help maintain the balance between the different roles – in combat d4s are easily hurt, whereas d10s shrug it off. D10s are not as “consistent” or “accurate” as d6s or d8s – but they last longer. This ensures that the characters are balanced against one another but still distinct.

THE CHAIN OF CONDITIONS (taking a “lower” condition when you already have a condition) prevents the game from slowing down and pushes characters to the brink. In earlier versions of the game, it was very easy for an astute player to avoid dying by careful use of conditions.

If you are playing with newer players, or are looking to soften the game, you can pull back on these two rules – introducing the pain back as the game evolves.

TELLING A STORY TOGETHER

We look at roleplaying as a conversation between the players and the Game Master. These tips will make your game easier to run and more immersive and interesting for everyone playing.

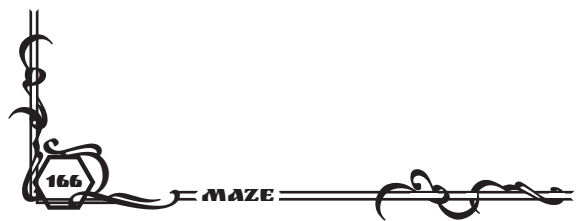
SOCRATIC DIALOGUE

As the **mc**, you should always be asking questions and only ever suggest actions as a last resort. The game is the most compelling when you describe a scene, and the characters take up the torch and fill in the details.

When you are playing with newer players you will need to direct them more often, and that’s okay as well. Over time, start to pull away from showing them the system and start asking them more questions about their characters.

ADDRESS THE CHARACTERS

Not every player wants to “get into character”, but if you address the Characters, it will drive the players to act “in character.” Some players will never do this – and that’s cool – but a few players talking and acting in character will drive a story forward.



SHARE THE TORCHLIGHT

Make sure that every player gets a chance to shine. Not every player wants to have the spotlight on their character but try and make sure that every character has something to do. When a player chooses an Aspect and a Class, they are signaling to you what they want to do. If no one chooses a Sorcery Aspect, it will be a very different game than if they are all Mages.

When you are making games remember that there are four core roles that the players are choosing – the Paragon, the Vanguard, the Fighter, and the Sentinel. Paragons want strategy to defeat, Fighters want to fight things, Vanguards want to explore, and Sentinels want to survive. By making sure that you have all of those elements in your maze, the players will all find chance to engage and shine.

HER EYES BLAZED LIKE A THOUSAND FIRES

Ultimately, all roleplaying is a weird form of group storytelling. We are all sharing a fiction together – and the game is at its best is when the players are part of that storytelling, not just players of a game. When a player comes up with a great description, or a novel idea that uses the game's fiction – reward them with Advantage on their roll. If the player simply “attacks the troll” it's just a roll. If they “knock the flaming brazier to the ground with a kick and whirl their morning star through the smoke”, perhaps give them Advantage on that roll.

Some players will immediately try and abuse this – by giving flowery, purple prose descriptions of all of their actions – but you should only give Advantage to ones that are novel, interesting, and use the trappings that you have put into the game. And, don't forget if it's good for the goose, it's good for the gander. So, when you think of neat ways to punish your players with the environment, give it a great description and make them roll against it with Disadvantage (since you can't give yourself Advantage).

GET LAMP

“From dream worlds to nightmare planets, through mazes of madness to tiny time holes in space, down pathways of desire to a new Atlantis, the compass rose points the way.”

- Ursula Le Guin, *The Compass Rose*

MAZES emulates adventuring fiction; it's not a simulation of the adventurer's lives. Games of Mazes start at the Door to Adventure, and end after a Dramatic Moment.

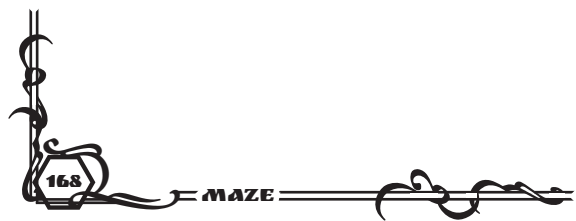
THE WORLD OF MAZES is a harsh, broken place. It is dangerous and brutal, but there is beauty and adventure to be found outside the safety of the cities and the towns. There is a world that these characters live in, and your players may want to know about their homes.

To ensure that the focus of the game stays on the mazes and adventures – there is never any danger “in the town.” Wherever the party has established their “home” will not be a place where adventures happen, they have to venture out beyond the walls to find treasure and glory.

MAZES is a world that can be mapped, but the maps are always going to be wrong. Never let the details on a map stop your story – and never let the players have too good a map. When you make a map, be ready to change it. Be willing to follow the flow of the characters. Be ready to knock down walls, generate secret doors, and generally forget entire areas of maps.

Many Maze Controllers like a map to define the edges of their adventure. We do. When you have a map, include a few rooms to explore and nothing more. Each map is probably an entire night of play in and of itself.

The lands of Mazes are broken and strange. Large overland maps are woefully outdated if they were ever accurate to begin with. Don't let the players see your world map – just let them see the world around them.



FOUR SOUGHT ADVENTURE

“Must be one of the ones he had run into in the maze.”

- Glen Cook, *Tower of Fear*

You have gathered a group of players together – you’re the **MC**, the host. We have found that the optimal number of players is 4 adventurers and 1 **MC**. However, anywhere from 2 to 6 adventurers make fun games. Games with more than 7 total people at the table are unwieldy at best.

The first question to answer is who everyone will be playing. Are we playing new characters, or returning with existing characters? The rules of Mazes assumes that every session of the game is a complete – starting at the Door to Adventure, through to the Epilogue.

Our experience is that the first few times that you play Mazes, you should strive for a Four Dice party – with each player taking on a different role – your party should have at least one paragon, one vanguard, one warrior, and one sentinel.

Once you are familiar with how the dice mechanics work in the game, your players should feel free to mix that up any way that they feel comfortable.

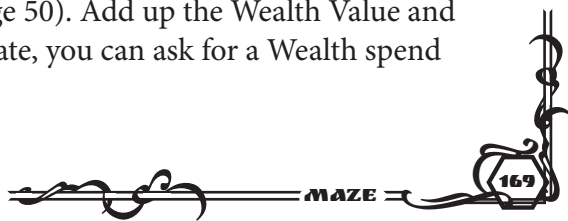
THE EPILOGUE

At the end of a session, we have a moment to look back on the game and share – as well as perform some simple maintenance actions.

We have found that asking everyone at the table to reflect on something that was interesting or cool to them that another player did is a great way to reinforce good gameplay and fellowship at the table. It is also a great way for a Maze Controller to find out what the players thought was fun.

After that, tabulate how much Treasure the party has acquired (or has left). The party needs to spend a Treasure if any member of the party is currently **HURT**. This shows the cost of healing the party and heading home. Inform the party that their **CONDITIONS** are all cleared (including **MARKED**).

After that, each member of the party rolls their die equal to the number of treasure on the Treasure Roll chart (page 50). Add up the Wealth Value and leave it to the party to split. As appropriate, you can ask for a Wealth spend to maintain Lifestyles (as on page 52).



PRESENTING ASPECTS AND ROLES TO THE PLAYERS

As the Maze Controller, you get to decide which aspects and characters are available for the game that you are hosting. If you are going to run a session about the Desert Arena of the Sand Gladiator, you may want all Sword types and no Sorcery. Where the Lost Library of Dragthometer the Diseased may call for nothing but Shadow and Sorcery types. You may want to include only certain classes, or present classes that you have created for this scenario.

During this phase, if a player wants to play a character that we have seen before on a previous adventure, you will know if the game that you are running would make sense for that character and can decide on their inclusion. We suggest announcing returning characters first – as they are established and that will limit the remaining players to selecting roles and classes to complement the known quantities of the returning hero.

We have found that the most interesting and engaging way of creating new characters is to simply ask the players each of the questions on the character list (from page 87). Once a choice is selected for **ROLE** or **CLASS**, we prefer that no one else take that option– but that's up to you and your players.

We ask the questions to the group, and each player answers in turn. After this, we will ask the creating questions to the Party.

-
- 
-  Why do you want to enter the Maze?
 -  How do you solve problems?
 -  What is your place in this world?
 -  Who are you in this world?
 -  What is your best attribute?
 -  What do you look like?
 -  What is your name?

QUESTIONING THE PARTY

There is interesting flavor provided by “a quest giver” or an “invitation to danger.” We can retain the best parts of that flavor by asking the players a question about why they are entering this maze. If you are creating a fully prepared module, you may want to offer a few different answers for them to choose from. When improvising, give them options and see where they are going.

In Maze Modules prepared by **9th Level Games**, the Party Questions will be shown at the start of an adventure, and the answers will drive starting Darkness (see page 42).

Perhaps, you have set up the ruin of an ancient tower, you may ask them – “Your party is at the base of the ancient and decrepit tower after a week of hard travel. Why have you come here – to remove the curse that is blighting the nearby town of Daggerspoint, to retrieve the fabled Crystal of Bomanz, or is to slay the treacherous Warlock Tabriz?”

Beforehand, you have thought of all 3 of these and put them into the scenario as possible drivers. Let your players decide why they are here. It will engage them directly and give them the same sense of purpose and ownership as if you had role-played an hour in the tavern’s common room. These questions can be used to adjust the starting **DARKNESS** of a Maze.

So, before the session starts, ask your leading questions. Tabulate any additional Darkness created by these answers (or bonus Treasure), and then ask the party, **“HOW DO YOU PAY FOR THIS EXPEDITION?”**



It is assumed that all starting characters start with **2 WEALTH**.

A player may spend **2 WEALTH** to create **1 PARTY TREASURE**. If the party has returning characters, they may add additional **TREASURE** to the coffers.

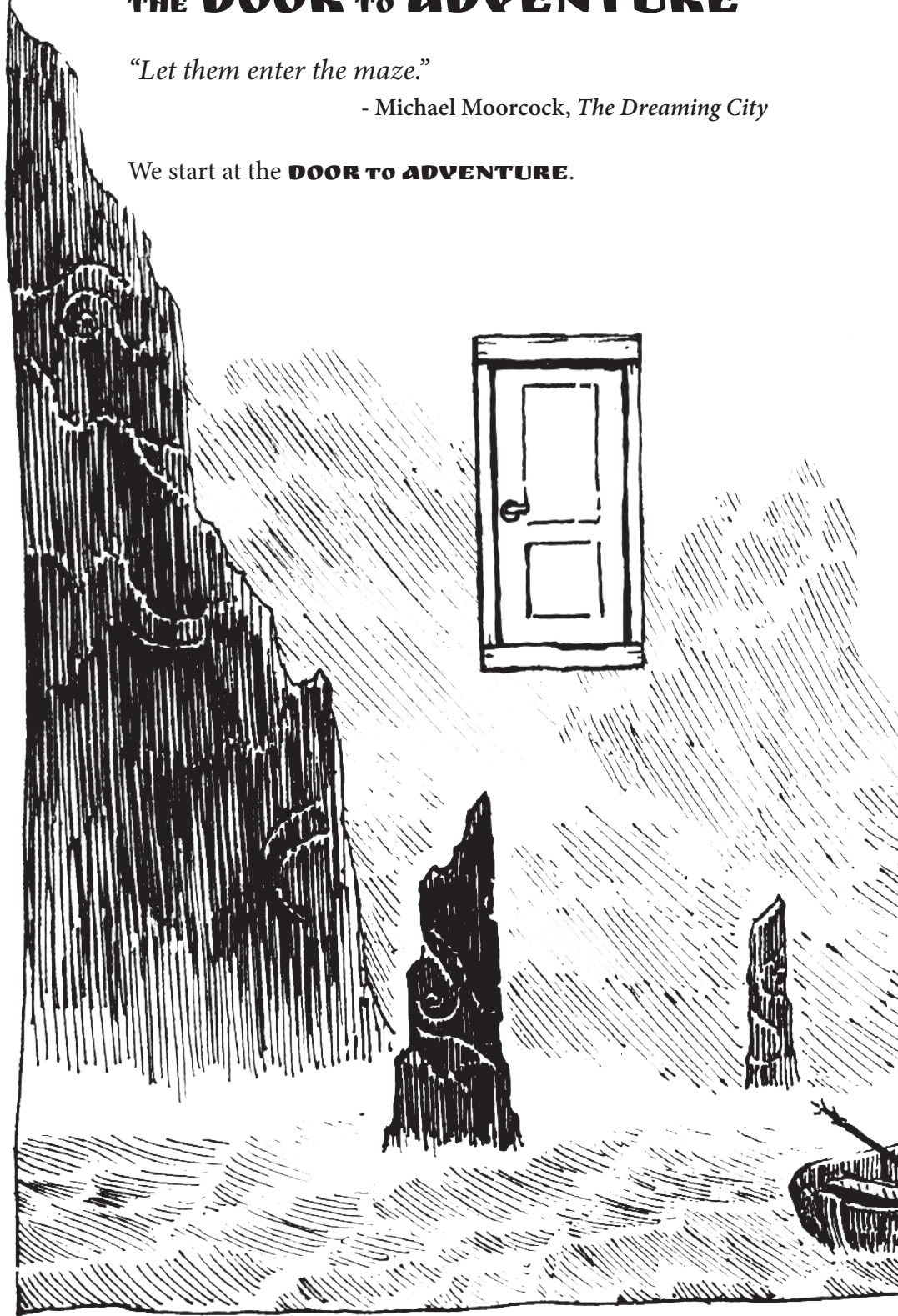
Once you have established all of this, you will have a party ready to adventure, as well a starting value for the **DARKNESS** and **TREASURE**.

THE **DOOR** to **ADVENTURE**

"Let them enter the maze."

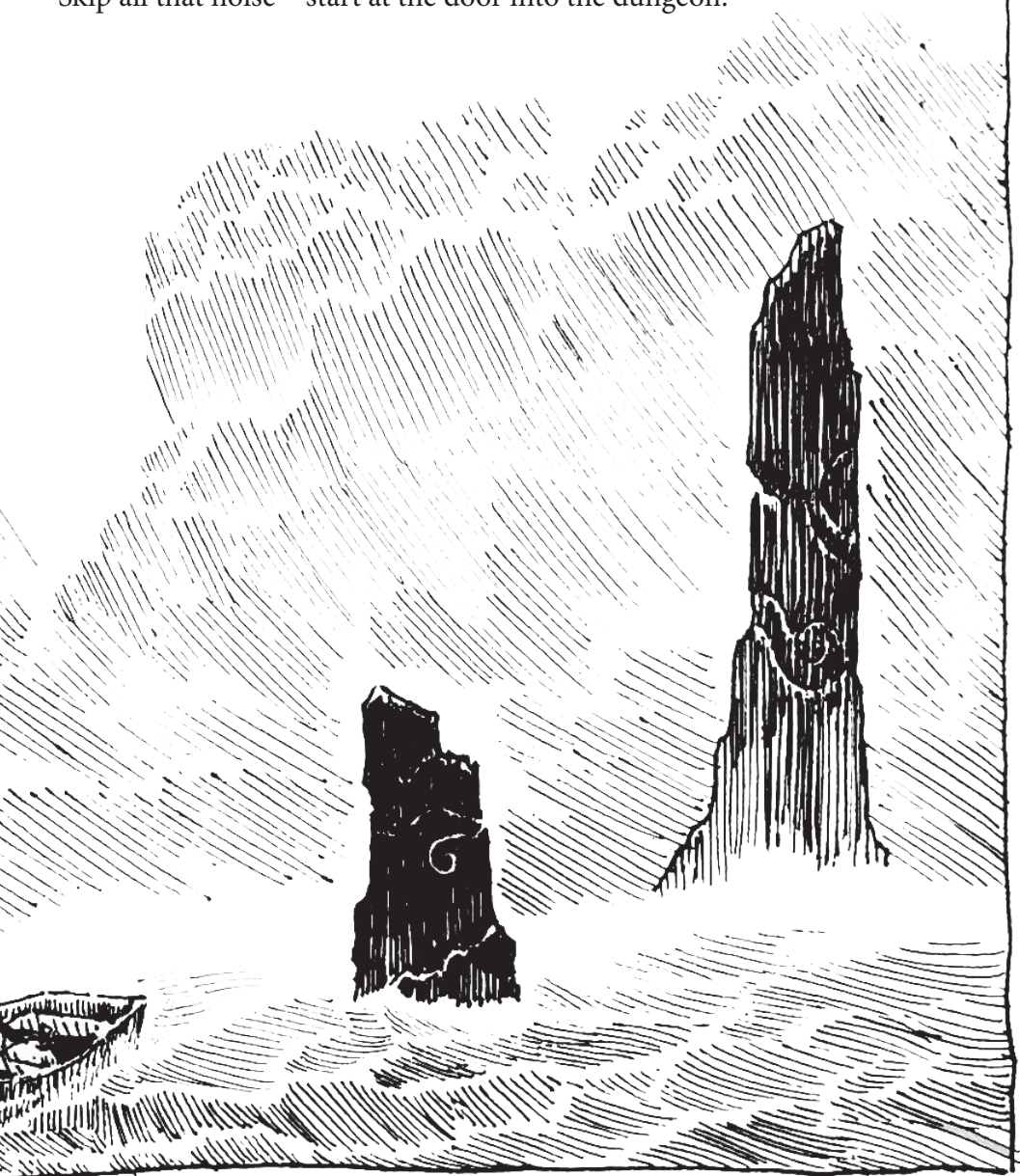
- Michael Moorcock, *The Dreaming City*

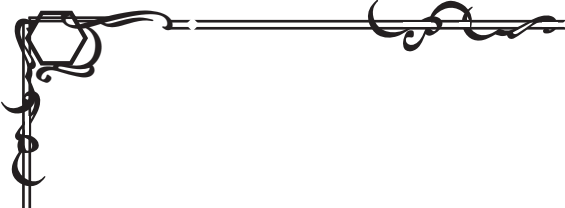
We start at the **DOOR** to **ADVENTURE**.



Each adventure within **MAZES** literally begins just as the party is about to **ENTER THE DARKNESS** (whether physically or metaphorically). We start the players as close to the danger as possible, as close to the heart of the story as we can. In many other games, the players start in a town or their fortress or hangout, and they are invited into the danger – whether it is through a mystery, a request, or some dangerous event. In many cases, the party enters a place and looks for a “quest giver.”

Skip all that noise – start at the door into the dungeon.





interlude

Again, the dragon's flame-breath roared through the ancient stone hall, an all-burning stream wreaking a path of total destruction more brutal than any Rose had yet seen.

The fighter had fought the undead, defeated a bloodthirsty gryphon bare-handed, had even out fenced Izarro. But now Rose quaked.

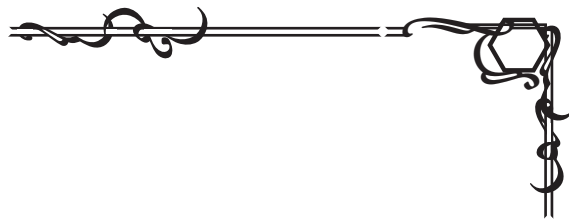
Bargle's reasons for raising the great Vulthoom from the sleep of death had seemed reasonable at the time. She and Lux had exulted in the riches Lux nicked from the crypt's overflowing stash. How could they have known the Witch King would retaliate by reanimating the Ruby Wyrm Pydaig herself?

Rose and Lux knelt behind a crumbling half-wall, their bodies for the moment hidden. "Izarro is dead, you wretched cutpurse," Rose shouted. "Why is your nose in a godsdamned book?"

Indeed, just past the wall lay the body of their wayward companion, the deft swordsman Izarro. The crackle of flames consuming his corpse sparked rage in Rose's gut—the anger of failure, of loss, of a job gone massively wrong.

Lux held up one hand, maddeningly patient. "It isn't just any book," he said from behind his mask.

Rose glanced down at her sword. Flames danced in reflection upon the honed blade. Moments ago, Izarro had darted across the floor of the ancient keep, making for the door into the next passage. The trap he stepped upon had not touched him, but in avoiding the poisoned dart Izarro had dropped his rapier, its clatter on the stone floor creating a massive, echoing sound.



“How is a book to help us, then?” Rose demanded. “Be quick. She comes.”

“I stole it from Bargle’s lab,” Lux said in a hoarse whisper. You could hear his mocking smile. “It’s a sorcerer’s tome, full of dread incantations. Like the one you mouthed to invite Vulthoom to join us for tea on this side of Death’s Door. Remember.”

“Can you trap Pydaig? Send her back into the darkness?”

Lux shook his head. “Nothing like that in here, not that I could cast.”

Beyond the wall, the undead dragon was moving. With the intuition of one long accustomed to fighting monsters, Rose understood that though Pydaig had only seen Izarro, she could sense Lux and Rose—their smell, the vibrations of their tense energy. She knew she was not alone in this maze.

“I think this abjuration might help us,” Lux continued. “I’m not much of a magic-user, but if I get this right, I can make you briefly invulnerable to flame.”

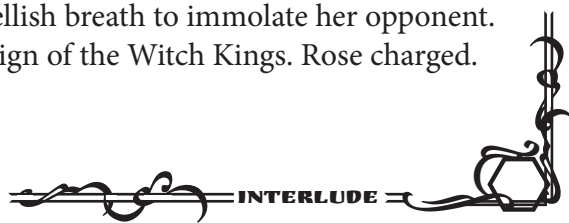
“If you get it right?”

The sensation of Lux’s spell washing over her body was curious— a warmth deeper even than anger, seeping into that narrow place between fine plate armor and her skin. When the words were done, he closed the book, and said only, “Go.”

Rose gripped her sword and stepped out from behind the wall. Pydaig, perhaps shocked by the boldness of this human, drew back in shock and hissed, saliva of sparks dripping from her blood-darkened teeth.

“You will pay for that,” Rose shouted, pointing her sword at Izarro’s charred remains.

Pydaig inhaled, preparing a deep and hellish breath to immolate her opponent. This was her lair, this wreckage of the reign of the Witch Kings. Rose charged.





being rules for creating and handling the various hazards that befall the party, including a book of ready-made hazards



~ Part Five ~

**ON MONSTERS
AND OTHER HAZARDS
OF THE MAZE**

ON HAZARDS

FEAR MY POWER



Hazards (monsters, obstacles, challenges, etc.) have two “stats” in **MAZES** – Hearts (♥) and Danger (☠). Hearts are the amount of damage or effect needed to resolve a hazard. Think of it like a player’s hearts – when they do something against the hazard, have them roll their effect and reduce the hearts of the Hazard.

Danger is level of the damage or effect that a hazard has when players fail against it. Since you aren’t rolling dice as the Maze Controller, you can just apply an amount of **DAMAGE** or **EFFECT** equal to the Danger of the Hazard.

EVERYTHING IS PLAYER FACING

One of the biggest differences between **MAZES** (and other *polymorph* titles) and most traditional **RPGs** is that Mazes is Player Facing. The Player is always the “acting force” in the fiction of the game.

As the **MC**, you never roll dice to see if something succeeds or fails – the **MC** sets up the situation, and what happens is based on the character’s actions. Hazards are player facing. As the **MC** you define what a Hazard is, what it takes to defeat or overcome it, and then you let the story happen.

For a **MONSTER**, this means that you never “roll to attack the players.” Instead, you state that the Monster attacks, and the player chooses to defend or avoid. You say, “The flint troll rakes at you with its powerful slate claws, what do you do?” The player rolls to see if they avoid or defend, not whether they get hit.

For a **TRAP**, you state the environment and let them investigate and explain how they approach. The player states, “As a Tomb Robber who is Gearwise, do I notice anything about the door?” You know the door is trapped (or you spend a Darkness to make it trapped now, take that!), so you reply, “It appears to have a strange mechanism in the handle.” You don’t roll to see if they find the trap, or if the trap affects them; the player rolls to see what they avoid or what they withstand.

SPENDING DARKNESS

Before you tell the players anything – they will already be afraid of the Darkness. But, what can the Maze Controller do with Darkness? The first thing that you can do is to let it accumulate to create a negative situation for the party (see the Rising Darkness on page 46). The other use is to fuel the actions of your obstacles, traps, and monsters populating the maze.

Mostly, you will spend Darkness just as the characters spend Stars and Treasure. These “Darkness Spends” are a way of creating custom actions within a Maze (without creating additional rules to handle every occasion), as well as being perceived as a fairer way to run a game. When you spend Darkness for player facing activities it accomplishes three positive goals – one, it signals to the players that they are succeeding (because you have to spend a resource to stop them); two, it helps to reinforce the idea that Darkness is something they should fear; and finally, even though you are throwing gas on their torches and shooting poison darts at them – it feels fairer than just an outright “because I said so.”

Remember whenever you introduce a Hazard to the players, take a Darkness. The rest of the Darkness will be generated by the characters getting themselves into tight spots. Use the Darkness as guide to what happens in a scene, but also use it to power your Hazards. You can spend a Darkness to affect the world of the player’s outside of Hazards, as well.

When the chips are down against the bad guys, you can spend a Darkness to refill a Hazard’s Hearts. This will allow you to keep an interesting encounter going even when the party slaughters everything that it sees. You can spend Darkness on your Hazards the way that a player spends Stars– to let you do things like cast a spell, escape deus ex machina style, do additional damage, avoid things the players have done, etc.

DARKNESS SPENDS

When creating a Maze Module, it is helpful to think of some things that you may want to spend Darkness on. This list is called Darkness Spends and could feature things like wandering monsters, special actions for a boss monster or a lieutenant, trap ideas, etc.

WANDERING MONSTERS

When creating a Maze Module, there may be optional encounters – wandering monsters, guard patrols, etc. – that you want to include but may not always use. In old school games, it was normal to include random tables for these to exist, but in Mazes, you spend Darkness to “summon” these optional monsters into play.

WATCH OUT!

You can spend a Darkness to create a Hazard – like a trap, locked door, or other complication. Tell the players that you are spending a Darkness; it is your choice whether or not you tell them what for... Doing this should always result in something that the players have to resolve in order to go on – unlocking a door, finding a way across a chasm that suddenly appears, trying not to set off the clockwork bomb, etc.

MAZE CONTROLLER'S FIAT

Sometimes, you just need something to happen to keep a story going. You can spend a Darkness (similar to the players giving you a Darkness for a flashback) for a fiat. When you do this, you might be hand waving away something out of character but paying a cost to do so.

USING FLASHBACKS TO BUILD THE WORLD

During the game, players and **MC** can insert “new” information into the story via a flashback. When the **MC** does this, they spend a **DARKNESS**, when the players do it, they generate a **DARKNESS**.

During a flashback the **MC** or the player can simply narrate the flashback– or you can role-play it out as a full scene. Generally, since flashbacks tend to happen **DURING** another scene, we find that players like to just state what the flashback is providing. When the players have a flashback during a scene, let them quick play/ narrate. When they want to include a flashback during downtime, encourage a roleplaying moment.

Players generally use flashbacks to provide reasons for why they are in the maze. A good reason for a flashback is to have some special knowledge about their enemy, or the place they have found themselves in.

When the **MC** takes the initiative and does a flashback, it almost always makes sense to roleplay it out. Using a flashback gives the **MC** a method to create a reason why a monster or minor character dislikes/hates/loves a specific character or provide some context for a decision. Using a flashback is a powerful tool to enhance drama in a situation, or to guide and control the players without having to railroad.

Let's say that you have a scene ready where the party will be encountering a tough decision between saving a person or gathering up treasure. You may do a flashback to show that the person in jeopardy is connected to a party member – an old flame or a friend from town – to give context and direct the party.

DEFINING HAZARDS

When you define a Hazard, you will give it Hearts, Danger, and Edges (as you would a character). Remember everything is player facing; so, edges don't provide you Advantage but they could produce Disadvantaged rolls for the players or provide guideposts on how to spend Darkness to use the Hazard.

HAZARD HEARTS

A hazard – whether it's a character, a monster, a trap, or an environment will generally have **HEARTS**. Throughout the rules we will use the symbol ♥ to denote **HEARTS**. Like characters, the Hearts of a Hazard represent how much abstract stress it can take before it is overcome. So, where Monsters have Hearts that show the damage they can take in combat before dropping, but a locked door, a flaming wall, or a bridge of mental energy could have Hearts as well. Hearts mean that the obstacle can be defeated through physical violence. When attacks are successful against it, reduce the obstacle's Hearts by the **EFFECT ROLL**.

Most Hazards don't have the option of taking Conditions, so when an obstacle runs out of **HEARTS**, you can refill its Hearts by spending a **DARKNESS**. When refreshing, reset Hearts to their starting value. In some situations, you may rule that it makes sense to give a hazard a condition instead of subtracting hearts. Named Hazards are a little different and explained on page 184.

HAZARD DANGER

When creating an obstacle, you need to define the potential effect it could have, or its general power level – called **DANGER**. Danger will mostly be the **DAMAGE** that a Hazard inflicts in combat, as a failure, or as a trap. Throughout the rules we will use the symbol ☠ to denote **DANGER**.

Danger needs to be strictly defined, since the **MC** never rolls dice. A Danger of **1** is low, a Danger of more than **5** is very dangerous.

When a player fails against a Hazard, they will usually either take the Danger in damage, or suffer a condition.

HAZARD EDGES

Many new hazards will have Edges that you think up. Think of these Edges as descriptors or tags – they don't require complicated descriptions, sometimes an evocative name is enough. Some Edges are common building blocks you'll need to fill out games and are presented here.

You can also give a Hazard a standard player Edge.

HAZARD EDGES

Area– Attacks from this Hazard apply to every adventurer in the same room or area.

Armored – This enemy is well armored or shielded. You are disadvantaged when rolling **EFFECT** against this Hazard.

Baleful– This hazard is inherently caustic or dangerous– causing damage to all that come in range. Based on their domain, they may emit burning flames, intense cold, poisonous gas, acid, crackling electricity, or some other damaging effect. When making a melee attack against this Hazard, lose an additional Heart.

Bound– Creatures that are bound have an unswerving allegiance to their creator that cannot be easily broken or subverted.

Chilling– Attacks from this Hazard can drain the heat from the less hardy. Adventurers hit by this Hazard must make a Bones save or gain the Chilled Condition. If an adventurer is Chilled, they are at Disadvantage on Blades and Boots saves until they can clear the Condition (through warmth – like a fire or a bottle of hard spirits).

Dark– This hazard is a harbinger of doom and adds to the overall Darkness of the Maze. When Encountered, take an additional Darkness (take 2 Darkness instead of the usual 1.)

Diseased– This creature is a disease riddled plague carrier. Whenever this creature deals damage, the target needs to make a **BONES** save, or they take the condition **DISEASED** (you act as if **TIRED** or suffer the effects of a specific disease at the **MC**'s discretion).

Elite – An **ELITE** hazard is designed to be a special threat. Elite enemies are more powerful than the party – and the players are always going to be Disadvantaged against them. Elite Enemies will spend Darkness to spawn new threats, more monsters (an orc chief calling his soldiers) or environments (an Anvil Ifrit turning the floor into lava).

Elusive– This monster is especially talented at dodging attacks. Attacks against this monster are always at a Disadvantage when the monster is not actively attacking.

Fighter – A **FIGHTER** enemy plays the role of Fighter, and as such is considered an offensive threat. Combat Saves are **DISADVANTAGED** if the character is neither a **FIGHTER ROLE** nor has the **SWORD ASPECT**.

Flying– This monster can fly at will or is considered to be flying at all times. Attacking a flying creature without being at the same level causes Disadvantage.

Grappling – This hazard attempts to grapple, hold, and stop its targets. Escaping from a grapple is required before you can affect this hazard (usually a Bones save to break free).

Hidden– Hazards that are hidden are hard to find and provide Disadvantage to spotting them. If the Hazard is not found before it attacks, it gets to take an additional action on its first attack.

Horde – A Horde's true strength lies in the fact that it is a swarm or large mob. Even if you are better fighter than the Horde, it will take time and energy to disperse and destroy it. A Horde requires multiple saves to defend against its actions (equal to its Danger).

Horrible– This hazard is monstrous to look upon. When first seen, make a **BONES** save or a **BOOKS** save, or be disadvantaged while fighting this horrible thing.

Huge – A **HUGE** hazard is much larger than the characters. Attacks against it are always Advantaged (because of its large size), but effect rolls are Disadvantaged.

Immortal– Once defeated, this monster will always return to terrify other adventurers or hunt down those that slew it. The method of how to deliver the final death to an immortal being is different for each of these special creatures.

Immune– This hazard is immune to one Domain, inside and out.

Insubstantial – An insubstantial Hazard can move through solid objects at will and is **RESISTANT** to physical damage.

Marquee– This hazard is the “big bad” or marquee moment in a maze. When you encounter this Hazard – set the darkness to Bleak if the party has not completed any requirements to defeating this dangerous hazard.

Minion – A **MINION** is weak and not a threat to the party. These types of Monsters do not add a Darkness when encountered, and actions against them are Advantaged.

Named – A **NAMED HAZARD** is a special type of enemy. Named Hazards are like Characters; in that they have an impact on the world more than just to be defeated by the player characters. Marquee foes will usually be named, as will their lieutenants.

Named Hazards will often use Darkness to “escape” rather than be defeated – so that they can appear again later.

Named Hazards can take Conditions. When they take Conditions, they refill their Hearts without having to spend a Darkness. Named Monsters can become **STRESSED**, **TIRED**, or **HURT** as characters can. While they have these Conditions, they lose their edges (providing Disadvantage) for those areas (Stressed on Books, Tired on Boots and Bones, Hurt on Blades).

Named Traps, Objects, and Environments can become **BROKEN** (all rolls against this object are Advantaged, failures trigger a negative effect).

Neutral – Neutral encounters do not immediately add a Darkness to the party when encountered, unless the Party provokes violence– at which point, the party takes a Darkness.

Paragon – A **PARAGON** Enemy is very good at what they do. Paragons are specifically way better at their special something. Any rolls against the “specialty” of the Paragon Enemy are Disadvantaged. Rolls and saves on Books against this Enemy are Disadvantaged if you are not a Paragon.

Resistant– This Hazard only loses 1 Heart, regardless of effect roll, when damaged by non-magical things.

Sentinel – A **SENTINEL** Enemy is defensively powerful and strong. Damage Effects and Bones rolls and saves against it are Disadvantaged by Characters without the Sentinel Role.

Slow– This hazard does not move quickly. All Boots Saves against this hazard are Advantaged.

Summoner– This hazard can call forth a particular type of creature to their aid. This can be done once for free, but additional uses of this Edge require spending a Darkness.

Team – A **TEAM** is a hazard that is part of a larger whole that is trained or focused to work as a unit. As long as the team is working together, the characters are Disadvantaged when attacking and defending. Once the team dynamic is broken up, they lose this bonus.

Terrible – This enemy is beyond the party's current ability. Fighting something like this is going to take its toll on the party. All actions against this foe are always at a Disadvantage, and all failed Action and Save rolls against it result in a Condition or damage.

Tiny – A **TINY** enemy is very small, and all attacks against it are Disadvantaged. Due to their small size, Effect Rolls against them are Advantaged.

Trap– This hazard is a machine and is susceptible to **GEARWISE**.

Undead– Unliving creatures are cold to the touch and lack the typical vulnerabilities of living, breathing creatures (they don't need to eat, breathe, etc.). Effect Rolls against the **UNDEAD** are disadvantaged unless they are Magic.

Vanguard – A **VANGUARD** Enemy is highly maneuverable and always on the move. You have to get them pinned down before you can kill them. Characters who are not Vanduguards are Disadvantaged against them on **BOOTS** rolls, and Ranged Combat rolls.

Venomous– Venomous hazards can deliver the **POISONED** Condition. While poisoned, you lose a **HEART** during your turn. You can clear **POISONED** with a **BONES SAVE**.

Vulnerable – This enemy is vulnerable to specific attacks, weapons, or items. Characters are advantaged when rolling **EFFECT** against this hazard.





a BOOK OF HAZARDS

A BOOK OF HAZARDS

“...the Great Maze was looming close ahead of them. They say, said Alex to the slave girl, that there are monsters here.”

- Fred Saberhagen, *Ariadne's Web*

Over the next few pages are a list of hazards for use in a **MAZES** game. They are listed alphabetically. A **MAZES HAZARD** record looks like this:

EXAMPLE MONSTER *(the name)*

Edge,  *Unique Edge* *(edges, any unique edges)*

N  **N** 

A description of the hazard is here.

ANIMATED MANNEQUIN

Armored, Bound

1  **8** 

Animated Mannequins come in a variety of shapes, sizes, and material. These variations will vary their durability and danger. The base mannequin is highly resistant to abuse and is bound by the process of their creation to a person, place, or title. They are unthinking, unfeeling, unsympathetic servants set to a purpose by their creator.

ANCIENT DRUID

Elite, Earth Magic, Shapeshift, Marquee

3  **11** 

Some very old druids have forgotten that they were once human – either losing their minds to age and loneliness or affected by horrible scars to the Earth they are connected to. Powerful Earth Mages are a terror to behold in combat – the trees walk, boulders rain from the sky, and the very grass grasps at your feet and saps you of life.

ANVIL DEMON

Armored, Forge Lineage, Strong

3



12



Anvil Demons are creatures of iron and fire. They are warrior demons with black iron bodies covered in spikes and blades. The Anvil Demon is dangerous in the extreme, but if you manage to hold one, they are an endless supply of power for many magical incantations – especially for enchanting and illusion work (as Forge magic literally pumps through their veins).

ARCANE SEAL

Forge Magic, Trap

2



0



The seal is a magical trap. Unless disarmed or dispelled, it explodes dealing 2♥ to everyone near it.

BACK ALLEY BRUTE

Sentinel, Streetwise

2



10



Back Alley Brutes are a cheap source of muscle commonly employed for short and messy jobs. They are brutish and know their way around the underside of any urban environment. Most are motivated solely by coin and those that don't know enough to stay bought don't last long.

BANSHEE HOUNDS

Insubstantial, Horde, ☠ *Draining Howl*

1



7



Often tamed as sentinels and watchers, Banshee Hounds have significant advantages over the outdated Gargoyle Owl. They can walk through walls, they operate intelligently in packs, and their howl can drain the will to continue from even the boldest thief.

BAT-WINGED DEATH FROG

Deadly, Fast, Flying, Grappling

2



10



Fierce hunters that dominate the air and ground. They run down prey on the ground with unending stamina and tear into it with wicked claws and fangs or take to the sky to ambush prey and predators alike with their chiropteran wings and grappling tongue.

BICKERKNOCKERS

Venomous, Quiet

3



3



A strange, clearly magical, offshoot of the mantis family, Bickerknockers are giant stick insects that look as if they are made entirely of twigs and leaves. Their thick and scaly carapaces are a shiny, mahogany brown. The average Bickerknocker stands 6 feet tall from the bottom of its front legs to the top of its insectile head.

Bickerknockers are thought to have originated from the magical fallout of a long-ago Witch Lord battle. Some Wizards believe that a forest one particular battle centered on was home to many insect species that were forcibly converted into magical beings by the miasmic clouds of magic found in that region for many years after.

Hardier than an adventurer would expect from their spindly appearance, these disquieting mantidae are attracted by contentious words and emotional displays of anger or fear. They seek strife, mainly emotional strife but they will also feed at physical fights if they are especially hungry.

Their steps are almost silent. They can sneak up on an unsuspecting party, especially one that is fighting, in less than a moment. They use a venom spray to increase the aggression in their general vicinity, thus ensuring a more delicious meal for themselves. If startled they will emit a clacking sound, like the wind blowing litter across cobblestones.

BLANKETER OOZE

Hidden, Chilling

2



9



The Blanketer is a winterbourne ooze made from snow that drops from fir trees to smother and consume prey seeking shelter. They are difficult to tell apart from natural snow trapped in the branches of trees, especially after a large snowfall. Anyone unfortunate enough to be caught under a Blanketer ooze experiences an unpleasant combination of caustic digestive juices and suffocation.

BLIZZARD ANEMONE

Baleful

2



11



A sentient snow ooze – it smothers, freezes, and devours anything that radiates warmth. It is highly territorial and will defend its location to the bitter end. Spend a  to have the creature split into 2 creatures, each with 7 .

BOG DYBBUK

Slow

2



4



The corrupting essence of the Murk combines with decaying plant and animal matter and forms shambling putrid forms with a singular drive – spread their disease to the living. Individually weak, but dangerous in large numbers.

BONEMEAL OOZE

Hidden, Sentinel, Undead

2



14



A sentient mix of bone dust and old earth, the Bonemeal Ooze is a patient killer with a tough and amorphous exterior. It often kills its prey by suffocating them or slamming them against a wall with its pseudopods until they die. The digested bones then add to their size.

BRASS IFRIT

Flying, Forge Lineage, Immune (Forge)

3  16 

Ifrits are powerful spell-casters and fighters. They use strong illusion magic to lull or trick their opponents before turning to an arsenal of fiery cones and flaming blasts to destroy their targets. Ifrits can fly on clouds of smoke without effort and can live completely submerged in magma.

CANDLE THIEVES

Elusive, Hidden, Quiet

1  4 

Candle Thieves are malicious winter spirits; will o' the wisp like fey creatures with the ability to disappear into nearby snowbanks. They sneak into camps and isolated cabins, where they steal or destroy striking stones, sparkers, and whatever other mundane fire-starting materials they can find. Once they have taken away the ability to create fire, they attack lights themselves – snuffing candles, wetting torches, and pouring sand on coal fires. When the luckless travelers die from the cold, they return to consume their now frozen flesh.

CARNIVORE TREE

Hidden, Armored

4  13 

Carnivore Trees replace their love of sunlight with a hunger for the flesh of warm-blooded creatures. The Tree makes two attacks with heavy whip-like branches (2  and the victim is Grappled). If the tree is grappling a player, on its next moment, it reels them in and bites them with its maw. The bite deals 4  but can be resisted with a disadvantaged BONES Save.

CLASSICAL DEMON

Dark, Flying, Night Magic, Shapeshift

6



6



Whole treatises have been written on

Demons, far more than I could recount in these scant pages. These books are invaluable resources if you intend to spend any significant time dealing with them. For our purposes I will tell you the most important things to know about Demons. Most often Demons enter our world via summoning. Though occasionally they will find their way through a naturally occurring gate or portal. Demons are unquestionably the most intelligent monsters any of us will encounter. You will find that they know things about you that none, save your closest compatriots, should know and they will use this knowledge to trick and intimidate you.

Demons smell of fire and sulfur. They are able to take almost any form but can never obscure their distinctive smell. Heed your noses.

CLOUD GREMLINS

Illusion Magic, Flying

1



5



Denizens of snow and sky, cloud gremlins

are cautious as they are often the prey and rarely the predator. More likely to trade for food and supplies than to fight against overwhelming odds. Their strange magics protect them and hide their homes from other monsters.

CORAL SCORPIONS

Venomous, Grappling

2



9



Part floating seahorse, part armored

scorpion, the vicious coral scorpion is a scavenger found in all bodies of water. Their curled tails end in venomous stingers and are used to propel them quickly towards their targets. Wickedly hooked pincers grasp and rend their victims while the stinger injects a paralytic poison. Sea Scorpions continue to grow throughout their entire lives, until they become so large, they cannot catch prey and starve to death.

CRABFOLK WARRIOR

Armored, Well Armed

2



8



The Mer-crab is an accursed mutation of merfolk and crustacean. Their arms are a mix of normal arms, pincers, hands, and claws in any combination. Mer-crabs are fiercely territorial, to the point of taking great offense at even ships passing near their dwellings.

CRYSTAL SPIDERS

Huge, Vanguard, Venomous

4



8



Huge spider-like monstrosities of quartz, Crystal Spiders, are found in the deepest of dungeons and caves. Older Crystal Spiders develop hair-like stalactites and stalagmites all over their bodies. These protrusions are highly prized by jewelry makers.

They build diamond webs, not to capture their prey, but to nest in. If you were as familiar with arachnids as this mage is, you would recognize their attack behavior from the common garden jumping spider. Like the common jumper they have four paired eyes. The two in the middle being the largest, and most mesmerizing.

Crystal Spiders attack by pouncing on their prey. They are deft hunters and can leap unexpectedly onto their victims. They then use their prominent fangs to bite down and paralyze their prey. Dragging them back to their nests to eat later. They have no need of wrapping their meals in webbing because their venom is also a preservative.

DOWNDRAGGER

Strong

1



5



A lurker consisting of a sucker-covered tentacle with no discernible anatomy. Downdraggers grasp rocks and reefs with one end and unobservant prey on the other. They feed by squeezing and pulling their victims deep underwater to be simultaneously crushed and drowned before slowly devouring them.

DROWNED CREW

Fighter, Grappling

2



7



Accursed crews of cursed ships, Drowned

Crews are the undying souls of pirates and others cursed to die on a sinking ship. They have all drowned and been cursed into an unliving existence. They are bound to their ship in death as in life and relentlessly attack anything that boards it.

DUELIST

Fast, Deadly, Lucky, Rank

2



8



A Duelist is different than your standard

Sellsword. Dueling is a hobby. Bored nobles and wealthy children often become Duelists – as you need time to train the blade, and a reason to get into duels. Unlike street fights or armed combat – a duel is a game, albeit a deadly one. It is hard to avoid getting into a fight with a Duelist, as getting into a fight is what they want most of all.

ENERGY SIPHON

Bound, Trap

3



0



Some places are protected by extremely

dangerous traps. Energy Siphons are permanently bound into place by connecting them with primal forces such as light, dark, life, or death. A player encountering an Energy Siphon must make a BONES save to resist the draw. On a success, they lose 3 HEARTS, on a failure they gain a CONDITION.

EMBERMAW

Baleful, Terrifying

3



10



Brutish thugs of the high reaches, the

insides of the dreaded Embermaw burn with blistering intensity. Deadly flame spills from any wound they take, and their bite burns with white hot heat. They have a special taste for Fog Wolves.

EYRWULF

Sky Lineage, Horde

1  3 

The result of alchemical experiments conducted in the early days of the Invisible College resulted in a species of elemental creatures that for a brief time caused much dismay and destruction. The experiments were quickly halted and many of the creatures were sadly destroyed. Some, however, escaped. Among those were Sky-aligned wolf hybrids, the ancestors of the creature we now call an Eyrwulf.

Eyrwulves are found in all shades of blue and grey. They have a soft, cloudy appearance, like a large wolf made out of the sky above you. Eyrwulves hunt in packs. Their ability to dissipate themselves completely into the surrounding air in the blink of an eye makes them difficult to defend against. They must reapparate quickly or they risk never being able to incorporate themselves again – turning to mist is a powerful but dangerous adaptation.

Eyrwulf puppies are not suitable pets for children, despite their charming appearance.

FALLEN ANCIENT

Flying, Insubstantial, Resistant, Undead

1  6 

The fate of those that came before is largely unknown. In some dark places, remnants remain as unliving specters, drawn to the warmth of life. Fallen Ancients are dangerous in number but not difficult to dispel when isolated. Mundane weapons are of limited use in dispatching them and their ability to drift through walls is disconcerting when attempting to camp in an underground ruin.

FOG COVOTE

Elusive, Insubstantial

1  6 

Insubstantial stalkers until the moment their bite finds purchase. They hunt in silent packs, able to slip into any burrow or home.

FROST PHOENIX

Baleful, Immortal, Marquee

4  21 

An apex predator that lives at the roof of the world where the sky touches the ice-covered rock of high mountains. Legends call it immortal, rising anew when the bitter north wind crashes into a mountain thunderstorm. Feared for its icy breath, startling agility, and razor-sharp claws – the Frost Phoenix can breathe a line of freezing air as an attack and being near the monstrous bird will chill anyone to their death from the cold blue flames.

FUNGLION

Diseased, Vulnerable

4  9 

Funaglions are a rarity these days. Majestic, musky beasts Funaglions resembles a lion's general shape, but their bodies are the soft flesh of a mushroom. Their manes, a large brown cap with yellow frills underneath, are situated over their heads, rather than around their faces like a typical mammalian lion. Their claws, sharp and hard as stones. A scratch from a Funaglion will cause a high fever in its victim, similar to a variety of swamp plagues.

One of the Funaglion's defenses is to violently exhale spores in a great purple cloud. These spores, if inhaled, will cause a sickness that frequently ends in death. If the corpse of the deceased is not disposed of properly it will dissolve and bitterking mushrooms will spring up from the resulting muck.

GAUNTWOLVES

Ardent, Fighter

3  6 

A gauntwolf is a thin but sinewy muscled predator. It has fearsome slaving jaws and moon-brightened shining eyes. The Gauntwolf travels in packs and is a relentless pursuer of prey. Unlike forest wolves and other canids, the gaunt wolf is demonic in nature. A truly mean predator that enjoys playing with prey – it revels in fear and madness.

GIBBERING KARNO

Dark, Sentinel, Horrible

4



8



The Gibbering Karno is a mass of oozing tentacles, bleeding vesicles, and pulsating mouths. A gibbering monstrosity where eyes open randomly in the quivering flesh – a massive mass of madness and mucus. The blood abomination wants to grab hold of prey and suck the liquid from their bodies, squeezing until eyes pop and blood pours from ears and mouths. A truly horrifying and scary sight that some say is the true demoniac form of the vampire.

GRANDAVERMOJ

Earth Lineage, Huge, Vanguard

4



9



Some believe that deep in the center of the earth there dwells a great sleeping serpent. Should this serpent awake, the world would be destroyed. The serpent's children guard her dwelling place and come to the surface in times of great turmoil to remove the threat to their mother's sleeping place.

Many Wizards believe this myth developed as a way to explain the origin of the Grandavermoj. Though we do not have the ability to verify what lies deep in the center of our world.

Grandavermoj secrete a crystalline deposit that is highly prized by alchemists and healers alike for its many useful properties. Collecting these leavings is a difficult and dangerous task, as Grandavermoj are sensitive and aggressive beasts.

Grandavermoj shake the earth above as they travel from place to place to place below the earth. When they emerge, the earth breaks like a crust of bread. They leave huge holes behind. These can also be seen in caves and dungeons they have traveled through. If you can find a place where a Grandavermoj has surfaced before it fills with rainwater or forest litter you stand a good chance of safely gathering their leavings. If you are near a city, sell them for a tidy profit.

HERMIT GEOMANCER



Earth Magic, Naturewise, Tough

2



8



Those in tune with the magic of the earth itself call themselves Geomancers. Their disposition to strangers typically hinges on what they have caught those strangers doing and where. Anchorites are generally unhappy to see anyone in their chosen hermitage.

IMMORTAL BANE



Elite, Huge, Immortal, Marquee

5



18



The Bane is a monstrosly large demon formed from solidified darkness. Its features are glassy and sharp like obsidian. It has six arms, two of which wield flails of smoky quartz. The others end in crablike claws perfect for grasping and shredding the living. It has a massive scorpion-like tail, that ends in a whirling mace-like orb. The Bane can only exist in the deepest and darkest places underground. The forces that pull them into existence are unknown, but they are drawn to large sources of life and activities that delve too deep.

IRONPHAGOUS DRAKE



Flying, Forge Lineage

1



5



Large red lizards that consume metal. Any metal. Ironphagous Drakes build nests in mines and can also be found in areas that have high concentrations of metal deposits in the soil. Their breath is corrosive, dissolving armor and weapons in moments. If someone is in that armor at the time, well, they are in for a very unpleasant experience— as the metal being corroded heats up as it disintegrates. These drakes then use their long, flicking tongues to consume the resulting flakes.

Typically, uninterested in anyone who isn't clad in metal, Ironphagous Drakes have been tamed by some wyrdsmiths who use them to clean up their shops. Though how they keep the beasts from consuming their stock is a question this Mage has yet to learn the answer to.

JAGGED TROLL

Earth Lineage, Baleful, Sentinel

4



8



Grey-skinned and lumpy-bodied Jagged

Trolls are man-sized, aggressive, and unintelligent. They are photosensitive. One touch of the sun and they turn completely to stone until night falls again. For this reason, Jagged Trolls are often found in caves or dungeons; dark places where they are able to move freely without concern for the sun. Other types of trolls are less common than the standard Jagged Troll – each taking on the aspects of the rock that they most resemble. Trolls have no use for gold or gems, but they do collect them to lure adventurers into their traps. This makes a Troll's nest a treacherous, but fruitful, place to look for treasure. Though the mess of bones and rotting things they also like to horde makes finding those gems almost not worth the trouble.

KYPHOTIC WEREWOLF

Strong, Shapeshift, Venomous, Deadly

3



11



In late autumn, during the Harvesting

Moons (also called the Blood Moons) lycanthropes of all kinds are agonized with the growing and changing of their bodies. The weak-minded among them can go mad and will terrorize the lands they inhabit. The Bloodmoon Werewolf will attack any living thing that approaches them – rending and tearing with tooth and claw. Anyone struck with the glistening spittle of this beast will go temporarily insane (taking the MADNESS condition) unless they resist with a BONES Save.

LAST BREATH

Chilling, Insubstantial, Undead

2



7



Last Breaths are cruel undead

manifestations of hate and death, formed from the dying breath of those trapped in snowstorms. They haunt off the beaten trails, paths, and roads. When warm creatures pass nearby, they follow until they can wind their way around their target. The touch of a Last Breath pulls heat from the blood, and breath from the lungs, leaving the victim chilled and sluggish (granting the Tired Condition).

LIGHTNING WISPS

Agile, Flying

1



4



Twisted from their mostly harmless origins, the lightning wisps prod the unwilling towards danger to feed on eventual scraps. Wisps will not start a fight but will slowly herd victims towards the nearest aggressive hazard with foot long tendrils of electricity.

MASQUERADES

Dark, Shapeshift, Quiet

3



4



Have you ever felt that prickly, eyes on the back of your neck feeling, but when you looked around there was no one there? You may have been in the presence of a Masquerade and are lucky to have escaped.

Masquerades can morph into the form of any object– though the size of the Masquerade affects the size of the object that they can transform into. A smaller Masquerade being more likely to mimic your teapot, than your treasure chest or desk. Like many wild magical beasts Masquerades will eat you if given the opportunity to do so. They are cautious predators and have been known to simply wait near their unsuspecting prey for weeks, poised for the right moment to strike.

While in magic rich mazes, especially in the ruins left by more whimsical Witch Lords– I exhort you to keep an accurate count of your possessions. The extra boot you found; may not be the boot you think it is.

MEMORIAL WIND

Trap

4



Semi-sentient wind bound within forgotten sky temples or ensorcelled to protect passages from intrusions and unwanted visitations, the Living Wind can slam the heaviest of armored adventurers on to the floor, into the ceiling, through a spiked wall, or over a cliff. Pushing through such an unexpected obstacle is a struggle for the strongest of explorers.

MOUNTAIN UNICORN

Sentinel

2



3



Mountain Unicorns chiefly resemble shaggy goats in size and overall body structure. Though there are some notable differences. Do not confuse them with the River or Jungle Unicorns, which while looking similar, are far different creatures. As you may know, having presumably seen a goat at least once in your life, goats often have horns on their heads; two set upon the top of their skulls that curve backwards. Unicorns have a single horn, which gives them their distinctive name, that rises straight out of their foreheads; set slightly above their eyes. This horn is typically thick and many-colored. The colors swirl together creating the illusion of two horns twisted together.

Unicorns are normally white in color, though rarely one may encounter a black or copper colored specimen. Rarest of all is the golden unicorn. Unicorn skin is scaled like a snakes. They have a coarse layer of guard hair that grows between their scales in abundance. Giving them a mostly shaggy appearance. Unicorns are shy, but dangerous beasts when cornered and best left alone, despite rumors of the wondrous things a Wizard could do with their parts. They dwell primarily in heavily craggy areas: mountains, flint hills, etc. Their split hooves are iron hard and can be used to great effect against a foe. Their horns are also formidable weapons. They secrete a liquid that can heal, or harm based on the unicorn's intention.

MUSKPASTRO

Dark, Earth Lineage, Tiny, Horde

1



2



Muskpastro are tiny, walking, talking creatures of living moss and lichen that protect and shepherd the strange flora of the underground and quiet, wet groves. Muskpastro are extremely unfriendly and easily offended, especially by forgetfulness. If you are ever told anything by a Muskpastro be sure to never forget it because they will not, and if you meet them again (or any of their descendants) unable to recall whatever it was they told you be warned of their wrath. They do not suffer harm to their caverns and caves and will severely punish those they believe to be causing it harm. Always check for signs of a Muskpastro before taking phosphorescent moss for light or moss for a fire. They are able to conceal themselves in darkness.

NETTLEHUND

Baleful, Strong

2



9



An ornery cross between a porcupine and a wild boar, the Nettlehund is seldom hunted for its meat, but instead is prized for the variety of uses alchemists, assassins, and scholars can derive from their wickedly sharp quills. The Nettle Boar is a large and muscular creature that is absolutely fearless when defending itself. Mind the tusks, mind the quills, but mostly mind the attitude.

OCEAN DRINKER

Elite, Huge, Terrifying, Marquee

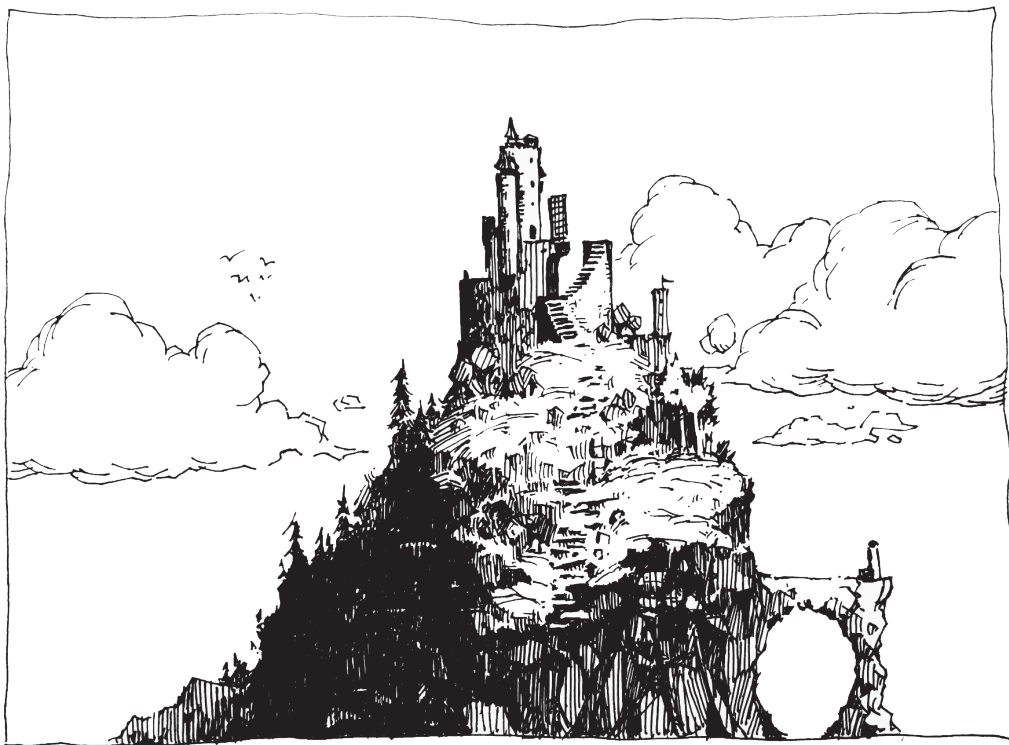
5



30



A terrifying apex predator as large as a building with a massive, wriggling, tentacle filled mouth. It can draw an unimaginable amount of sea water into its maw, forcing food through a guillotine of razor-sharp baleen. The tentacles are coated with paralytic suckers. Ocean Drinkers are the bane of ships, Seafarers, and anything remotely edible.





The Okuloi is a floating mass of constantly moving eyeballs. Each eyeball different from the last, in color, shape, and magical abilities. New eyes emerge from the depths of the presumably slimy interior of the beast to the surface, as others recede inward. Creating a constantly shifting, unsettling to observe aberration.

While they attack only your mind, that doesn't make them any less life-threatening than the attacks of a forgewolf. The continually shifting nature of their offensive behaviors make them difficult to defeat. With this warning in mind, I am able to tell you that there are some general rules that will help you should you encounter an Okuloi in a Maze. The type of eye the beast has trained upon you will give some clue as to what type of mental attack they may strike you with.

Mammalian: These eyes are most likely to contain the magic of the elements. Expect the ground to shake or open up underneath you if you are caught in this wild gaze. Or perhaps you will be engulfed in a tidal wave or struck by lightning. If it is any type of natural phenomenon, you could experience it.

Insectile: Many-faceted, almost jewel-like, these eyes draw you in, in, in, and further in. Those who have faced this gaze are left trapped in a never-ending unfolding of kaleidoscopic patterns, they are lost in their own minds and die quickly of thirst or hunger.

Human: These eyes know your secrets... and will haunt you with them. Do not, under any circumstances, catch the human eye of an Okuloi. The longer an Okuloi lives, the more human eyes they steal and therefore the more life threatening they become.

Remember these things are not actually happening to you. Though my warning matters little because you will be unlikely to overcome the sheer terror you encounter from believing that they are.

Okuloi are extraplanar beings. One snuck through a gate opened when the Wizard Dendrydion (Yes, the very same Dendrydion who was blamed for the fall of the Purple Keep some **2000** years ago) botched a simple demon summoning.

OWLBEAR

Fighter, Strong.  Wise

4



7



A strange alchemical mix of owl and bear.

Their bodies are covered in fur from the waist down and feathers from the waist up. Possessing more intelligence than either animal alone, Owlbears have created their own societies. Living together in groups affords them more resources and protection than they could provide themselves alone.

Owlbears are fierce fighters, using all of the strength provided by their bear nature and all of the wits of their owl nature. However, if you take the time to befriend an Owlbear you will have a friend for life.

PENNY GREMLINS

Forge Magic, Tiny

1



4



Distant kin to their Cloud brethren, the

Penny Gremlin is typically only seen during the warmest days of the summer. Their power waxes at the height of summer and often sends small groups of them roaming drunkenly through the wilds looking for copper to eat.

PYROMANCER

Deadly, Elite, Forge Magic

2



4



The average pyromancer is not someone you want to upset. Powerful Forge Mages are a terror to behold in combat. They are excellent tacticians and excel at exploiting weaknesses in their opponents. What is often overlooked is their exceptional talent at illusion. Master Forge Wizards can create the most believable reality from nothing. They can make an advancing army march off hidden cliffs and summon illusions to beguile the craftiest of merchants.

They are excellent tacticians and excel at exploiting the weaknesses in their opponents. They love a good fireball and are often surprisingly good sword wielders.

QUIETUS SCORPION

Armored, Venomous

2



8



The name of the creature depends on who has seen it and lived. Their front half is mostly a wide mouth with sharp teeth and fiery breath. The back half is chitinous, has too many legs, and a wicked bulbous stinger that drips with poison. They hate everything and everyone. Their meat is considered quite a delicacy, even if it is extremely hard to capture them without harming the meat beyond repair.

RAVENOUS ORCHIDS

Grappling

1



10



Ravenous Orchids are large, sentient plants that roam during the summer in search of food. They have long grasping tendrils which they use to wrap around unsuspecting passersby or sleeping prey. The meal is then pulled into an acidic bath of nectar and grinding fibers and digested.

RAZOR OWL

Fast, Flying

2



6



Razor Owls are the silent killers of the autumn sky. Their feathers are mottled grays and browns which blend seamlessly into the fading light of an evening sky; however, they are strong and sharp like the edge of a blade when the Razor Owl slams into an unsuspecting target. They are prized by archers and fine tool makers, but the challenge of encountering one without losing a finger, ear, or eye leaves catching a Razor Owl to the most daring or desperate hunter.

ROPE MIMIC

Minion, Grappling, Shapeshift

1



1



Rope Mimics are small coarse snake like shape changers. Particularly drawn to sunken ships where they imitate loose ropes floating in the water to snare and squeeze unwitting prey. They are easy to defeat individually, but dangerous in large numbers.

SANGUISUGE

Beautiful, Elite, Sentinel,  *Mind Reader*

2



5



Sanguisuges derive sustenance from the fresh blood of living creatures. Their mouths, like those of leeches, are round with multiple rows of teeth. Their bite leaves a mark with straight red lines that emanate from a circular, open wound that always weeps.

Sanguisuges are universally considered beautiful. When they create more of their kind, they can use any other sentient creature to do so. Those taken by the Sanguisuges die and rise again with all of their infirmities healed to live an essentially immortal life. Though in this state they are no longer the person they once were. In their place is a new being whose essential nature is soulless, monstrous, and cunning; nothing of the person you knew remains. Do not trust their promises of eternal health and beauty, you will lose your soul if you fall to a Sanguisuge. A newly turned being's skin will fade to a blueish grey. Their fur or hair will lose all its color turning yellowish grey. Their eyes will gain a metallic cast, that looks a dull iron in sunlight, but turns mercury silver in moonlight. Sensitive to light, you are unlikely to encounter a Sanguisuge at mid-day. These physical traits mean Sanguisuges are often found near water, the cool darkness of an underground oasis being their preferred habitat.

They can slip upwards from a pool of water in total silence, not a ripple will be seen from their passage. They will rise from the water dry, and pleasantly attired. In this way they can travel easily in nearby towns to find more victims. They will greet you by name and attempt to engage you in conversation to bring you closer in proximity to them. Their smell is musky and wine-like. It is their smell that makes them such a formidable predator. It causes a short period of giddy, intoxication followed by a mindless, cloudy, lethargy. From this behavior I believe that those killed by Sanguisuges are at least not in much pain when they die.

Sanguisuges can be killed by being set in full view of the sun when it is at the highest point of the day, this will cause them to dry completely. They must then be set atop a blazing fire to be burned to ash. If they are not burned up completely, they may rehydrate in the night and come back to "life"! Because of this they may sometimes be frightened by fire. You may also chop one's head off, be sure to bury the head separately (at a minimum of a day's travel apart from the body) if you choose this method. Or you may drive an iron (not wood, iron! wood will only slow them down) stake through their heart. If you have staked a Sanguisuge you must then dry them in the sun and burn them to ash.

SHATTERBONE

Area, Undead, Vulnerable

2



5



Shatterbones are the animated forms of the fallen, stripped of everything but their dry and brittle bones– held together with strange magics. They fight with whatever is available, including other bones or claws. When they are destroyed, they explode in a cloud of sharp bone fragments that hit anyone who fails a BOOTS save.

SHIMMER BEAR

Illusion Magic, Tough, Quiet

2



10



Shimmer Bears are the carnivores of high summer and some of the most dangerous creatures roaming across the plains. Although large, they are adept at sneaking through brush and high grass. When confronted, they are challenging to handle because of their inherent illusory nature– a Shimmer Bear is rarely where it appears to be.

SMOKE PANTHER

Fast, Quiet, Vanguard

2



3



The smoke panther appears to be a great cat hiding in the shadows – until you get close enough to see that the smoke and fog surrounding the animal is part of the creature itself (or vice-versa). Nearly silent – the smoke panther creeps like fog while stalking prey, preferring to leap down from a height to catch the unwary in their knife-like claws and teeth.

SORCEROUS LICH

Dark, Elite, Forge Spells, Named, Night Spells,
Marquee

4



7



The powerful undead of your nightmares.

Liches are often Wizards who have forgotten the gift that mortality gives us. They have removed their souls and hidden them away in a magic item to give themselves a twisted version of immortality. Liches have power over other undead beings and are notoriously difficult to defeat. The best way to do away with a Lich is to discover the location of their soul (hidden in a magic item) and destroy it.

Liches look dead. When they have flesh it is desiccated and pulled tight to their bones. Many are missing any kind of flesh altogether and walk about as skeletons.

Because of their long “lives” Liches often possess large fortunes and dress themselves in rich fabrics and heavy gold jewelry. They tend to have access to powerful and foul magics, and a host of servants and protectors. Seldom, will you meet a Lich that isn’t a “named” character.

STORM SHARKS

Sky Magic, Horde

2



8



Deadly hunters that use storms to cover

their approach and attacks. They are attracted by movement in water as well as blood and magic. Storm Sharks work in packs to corral prey into a circle where they can execute attacks from all sides. The pack leader can channel the power of the storm itself, controlling the weather. A storm shark breathes a deadly cone of lightning as its opening attack, which can shock and stun an enemy.

SWAMP SIREN

Elite, Marquee, Sentinel, Summoner,  *Howl*

3  21 

When confronted, the Swamp Siren defends themself with painful shrieks and razor-sharp claws. Their knobbly skin is unnaturally resistant, and they are practically immune to fire. When the Siren attacks, it makes two slashes with its claws. The Piercing Howl of the Swamp Siren drains the life from all who hear it. To use this ability, the MC must spend a Darkness. All players able to hear the howl must make a BONES Save, or their body is wracked with pain (have the player roll their own die in damage against themselves). The Swamp Siren can also use the bog itself to aid them. When they do, a number of Bog Dybbuks equal to the number of players rise from the swamp and immediately act. The Bog Dybbuks remain until defeated. This ability requires spending a Darkness to use.

SWIRLING DEATH

Strong, Trap

4  0 

A malicious spirit bound into a vortex of water and the nemesis of Seafarers everywhere. Swirling Deaths can slam the stoutest Seafarer overboard. The pull of the vortex can drag down the strongest swimmer to a watery grave.

SWORDTUSK BEHEMOTHS

Armored, Fighter, Huge

4  14 

These mammoth mammals have a heavy gait that shakes the earth as they walk. Their hard heads feature a long, opposable tube where another animal's nose would be found. Next to this tube are two long tusks. These tusks when examined are made of a metal unknown to alchemists. This metal will not melt in even the hottest fires. If one could find a way to utilize it, they would find themselves quickly inundated by riches. The Swordtusk Behemoth's fur is strange. Curly and wooly, it is also metal. Tufts of it are highly prized by tavern keepers because it can be used to scrub any hard surface clean. An angry behemoth can cause untold damage. Thankfully they avoid towns.

THANATOS BLOOM

Baleful, Huge

2



11



Thanatos Bloom is a recurring hazard drawn to watery surfaces. This deadly algae blooms and grows quickly. When it senses prey, it strikes with sticky pseudopods to debilitate and digest its victims. If left unchecked, it can become large enough to engulf its prey in an acidic blanket of digestive goo.

TREASON VINES

Trap

1



0



Treason Vines pull unwary travelers off ledges, into creek beds, and under quiet forest ponds. Avoiding a vine hazard is a Boots Save. On a failure, the player loses a H and is dragged away.

TWELVE-FINGERED CLAMPER

Strong, Quiet

3



9



Deadly vermin found in cold and dark keeps. Activity, often brought on by visitors seeking shelter, wake The Clamper from slumber. In the night, it creeps quietly through the corridors until it comes across a sleeping target. Its preferred method of killing is silent strangulation followed by biting off and devouring the head of its victim. Consider it a Danger 1 hazard when its target is not sleeping.

UNHALLOWED WRAITH

Insubstantial, Night Spells, Resistant, Undead

5



5



Unhallowed Wraiths are life-taking ghosts

whose deaths were so horrific that they rose again as vengeful spirits to seek the end of, not only those who caused their gruesome deaths but, all of life itself. Anyone can become a wraith if their death is violent and terrifying enough.

These foul specters are not the see-through visions of their ancestors that every young Wizard conjures during their apprenticeships; they are ragged, smoky spirits whose forms shift and change. Their eyes bore into you with a deep burning rage.

An Unhallowed Wraith's touch can take a year off of their victim's life in the blink of an eye. If they are able to grab hold of someone with enough force, they can pull ten years at a time. A person who has had their life taken by a wraith will become a wraith themselves.

It is advisable to seek a magical method of dealing with wraiths. Though if you are able to locate their remains you have a chance of dispatching them by laying them to rest properly. If that fails burn their bones.

VAMPIRIC COURSER

Diseased, Flying, Keen, Quiet

1



2



The Vampiric Courser is the classic

vampire bat – a master of stealth and spying, nimble and fast. The courser bat has exquisite hearing and darkvision, and its unclean bite spreads Lockjaw, The Tremble, and other fast-acting diseases.

VIRAGO JELLY

Baleful, Grappling, ☠ Translucent

2  4 

Virago Jellies are a strain of aggressive magical sponges that can grow to enormous sizes. They grow from a spherical spore expanding in rounded gelatinous masses. Their bodies or, more properly, masses are a uniform translucent pink or purple, allowing for a full view of whatever they are in the process of digesting.

Virago Jellies can and will eat most things. Though their preference, if a “mindless hunger for” can be called a preference, is for living flesh; they rarely eat plant material. A Virago Jelly will even excrete wood and fiber when eating a clothed person. A Jelly forced to subsist purely on plants will turn an unhealthy purplish grey and give off a sour milk smell.

Virago Jellies engulf their prey and immediately begin the digestion process. They initially secrete a numbing chemical that makes it easier for them to sneak up on an unsuspecting victim.

WALTZING ICE KNIVES

Elusive, Flying, Trap

2  4 

Flying icicles shaped like spear tips, blades, or anything sharp. They are animated by the Sky magic bound to an area and slash and dive at any intrusion. Not sentient, they are easily tricked, but nevertheless deadly.

WATERWYRD

Sea Lineage, Dark, Fast

2  3 

A waterwyrd is a creature of corrupted water – black mercury seeped into a pool of unmoving water will create a reflective surface. Any amount of time spent staring into the pool will result in a waterwyrd – a twisted reflection of living water – arising and attacking. Waterwyrds are a favorite Sea Mage trap – especially in areas where the trap will need to last (as the Wyrd will stay silent until there is something to reflect).

WILLOWKREATHER

Quiet,  *Petrifying*

1



6



Cruel harbingers of the fall season, a

Willowkreather's touch causes the skin of their victims to petrify and curl into segments resembling willow bark. The creatures follow at a distance, consuming shed stone skin until the diseased victim dies of exposure, then they feast.

XENOPHOBIC BASTARDS

Minion, Horde

1



3



Any place you go, you might encounter a

xenophobic bastard. If you are not of their tribe, they consider you an enemy – most likely attacking on site. They are weak minded, and low-skilled combatants, but will only attack in a mob – so that can make them dangerous. These bastards are most dangerous when they have a strong leader who is willing to send them into the meat grinder.

YOKED AMETHYST WYRM

Armored, Bound, Huge, Resistant

4



23



Even more dangerous than a wild

Amethyst Wyrms in the waste is a yoked wyrm – usually being controlled by a magical orb left over from the Witch Wars. A full size Amethyst Wyrms is over **100** feet long, and **20** feet wide, so when its controlled, it's a huge beast of destruction. Its hide is purplish, rocky, and quartzlike; and it is capable of burrowing into the ground almost as fast as it can move snakelike above it.

ZENVISAGA

Dark, Horde, Sea Lineage, Shapeshift

3



2



The Zenvisaga are an evil incarnate.

They do not have their own faces, so they steal them from other creatures, taking on their body shape and personality as camouflage. A troupe of Zenvisagas will slowly invade a town, taking life after life until they are all that is left. After which they move on to the next inhabited place, repeating the process. Where you find one Zenvisaga, there will be more.

Zenvisaga subsist on souls. They use their innate magic to turn the bodies of their victims into dirt or ash. This keeps suspicions low while they hunt their way through a town.

The most frightening thing about a Zenvisaga is their ability to completely embody the person you thought you knew... until they lift their borrowed face, and you see the horror underneath.



~ being rules for translation of the esoteric
runes and formulae of game wizards and dungeon
cartographers that have come before us ~



~ Part Six ~

ON **WHAT** HAS **COME BEFORE**



USING **RESOURCES** FROM THE **OSR**

*“The thief, Black Leaf, did not find the poison trap,
and I declare her dead.”*

– Ms. Frost, *Dark Dungeons*

There is a near limitless world of material available for the enterprising Maze Controller to use in their adventures with **MAZES**. For the last forty years, people have been writing adventures and material for use with fantasy **RPGs** – and almost all of it can be repurposed and used in a Mazes game – without much effort on your part.

OSR CLASSES AND PLAYER MATERIAL

Most **OSR** Classes can be redefined as Classes within Mazes with little change. First take the name and assign that as your new class name. You may have to add an adjective to the title, to better describe it within Mazes. The **HIT DIE** of the class will give you an idea of which role is usually assigned to the class. You will have to choose which aspect it belongs in (or if you will need to create a new Aspect to hold it).

Look through the description of the class. If the class has some **REQUISITE STATS** – you will want to add the Mazes equivalent Attribute to the Class (things like Fast, Agile, or Dexterous for a class with a **DEX** 13+ requisite for instance). Determine if the core of the class can be expressed as an existing Edge within Mazes, if so, assign that edge or edges to the class. Voila, you’re done.

OLD SCHOOL RENAISSANCE HAZARDS

Translating many of these things is very easy indeed, such as the Monster or Antagonist’s name, and description. Generally, you won’t have to change anything. Mechanical things, however, like abilities, hit points, and the like will take a little re-structuring.

CHALLENGE LEVEL FOR OSR HAZARDS

When thinking about the creatures and traps in an **OSR** book, the most important thing for us to consider is– the level of our characters. This may not sound that important for **MAZES**, since the power curve doesn't change much – but it's the most important piece of information on an **OSR** Stat Block.

In most Old School materials, Mazes Characters should be about equal to a 4th level character. If the character has an Advance, they might be 6th level. The retainers of the characters are most like 1st level characters.

So, to find an appropriate **CHALLENGE LEVEL** that the party can handle in a fight, take the **PARTY SIZE**, and add 2. If the party has advanced characters, add an additional 1.

CHALLENGE LEVEL =
2 + [Party Size]
+ [1 for ADVANCED]

OSR STAT BLOCK CONVERSION

An OSR “standard” Stat Block looks something like this:

Troglodytes (1d4)– **AC** 7(13), **HD** 2, #**AT** 3, **DAM** 1d4/1d6/1d6
NAME (Number Appearing) – **AC** N (20-N), **HD** N, Number of Attacks N,

Or something like this:

Hazard		
Hit Dice: X	Armor Class: X	Attacks: Weapon (damage)
Move: X	Saving Throw: X	Alignment: X
Special: X	Challenge Level/ ~~XP~~ : N	
Name, Description, Alignment, and Weapon		

So, we can easily take the name, description, and what attacks the creature uses directly. Number Appearing is also a direct lift, though usually we will just select how many of the creature we are using. Alignment is usually something you can ignore – though, for creatures that are truly Evil, you may want to give them an edge called **EVIL**.

HIT DICE

Take the creature's Hit Die (times the Number Appearing) – this is the Creature's Challenge Level. If the Party's Challenge Level is about equal (plus or minus one level), then ignore this. If the Party is higher, give the **HAZARD** the edge **MINION** (see **MAZE** page 30). If the Hazard's Challenge Level is higher, then give the Hazard an **EDGE** like **ELITE**, or **HORDE**. If the Challenge Level is more than twice the party level – then give the Hazard the **TERRIBLE** edge. If the Monster is named, give it the **NAMED** edge.

Hit Dice are also used to determine a creature's Hit Points, or in Mazes, their **HEARTS** ♥. Set a Hazard's ♥ equal to **HD** – Hit Dice, not Hit Points. An **OSR** Minotaur might have 6 **HD** (which would be between 6-48 hit points), so give them 6 Hearts. In Mazes 6 Hearts would be a lot and 48 would be a **GOD**!

ALONE IN THE DARKNESS

Darkness isn't a concept that shows up in other games, especially not in the **OSR**, so you are going to have to make this part up. Here are some simple rules of thumb:

HAZARD TYPE

Animals, Natural Obstacles
Fodder, Townsfolk
Most Monsters, Warriors, Guards
Powerful Monsters, Wizards
Big Bads and Boss Monsters

EDGE

Neutral
Minion
-
Dark
Marquee



SAVING THROWS AND CLASS LEVELS

Sometimes, a stat block will show something like "Saves as a 5th Level Fighter" or "Level 3 Wizard". In other situations, the monster may just have Class Levels (Thief 2). When these appear, you will most likely add one of the "role" edges.

"SAVES AS"

OR CLASS LEVELS

Druid, Wizard
Thief, Monk, Bard
Fighter, Ranger, Assassin
Cleric, Paladin, Barbarian

EDGE

Paragon
Vanguard
Fighter
Sentinel



ARMOR CLASS

Armor Class (**AC**) abstracts out how difficult something is to hit – it combines speed, dexterity, and physical protection. It may also give an Advantage or a Disadvantage to the attacker!

Modern rules tend to use **ASCENDING AC**, where the higher the **AC** the better. If the system you are translating from uses **DESCENDING AC** (like original **TSR** stuff or Swords & Wizardry), then the lower the **AC** the better.

If a creature has an **AC** lower than 12 (ascending) or higher than 7 (descending), than that opponent is considered to be easy to damage and attack; give them the **VULNERABLE** edge.

If a creature has an **AC** higher than 17 (ascending) or lower than 4 (descending), than that opponent is considered to be defensive or armored; give them the **ARMORED** edge.

ATTACKS AND DAMAGE

OSR Monsters generally have a number of attacks and the dice for damage. As a Hazard, this will set the **DANGER**. Danger is the **DAMAGE** that a Hazard does. Look on the chart below (or, halve the top value of the die and subtract 1).

DAMAGE	 DANGER
d4	1
d6	2
d8	3
d10	4
d12	5

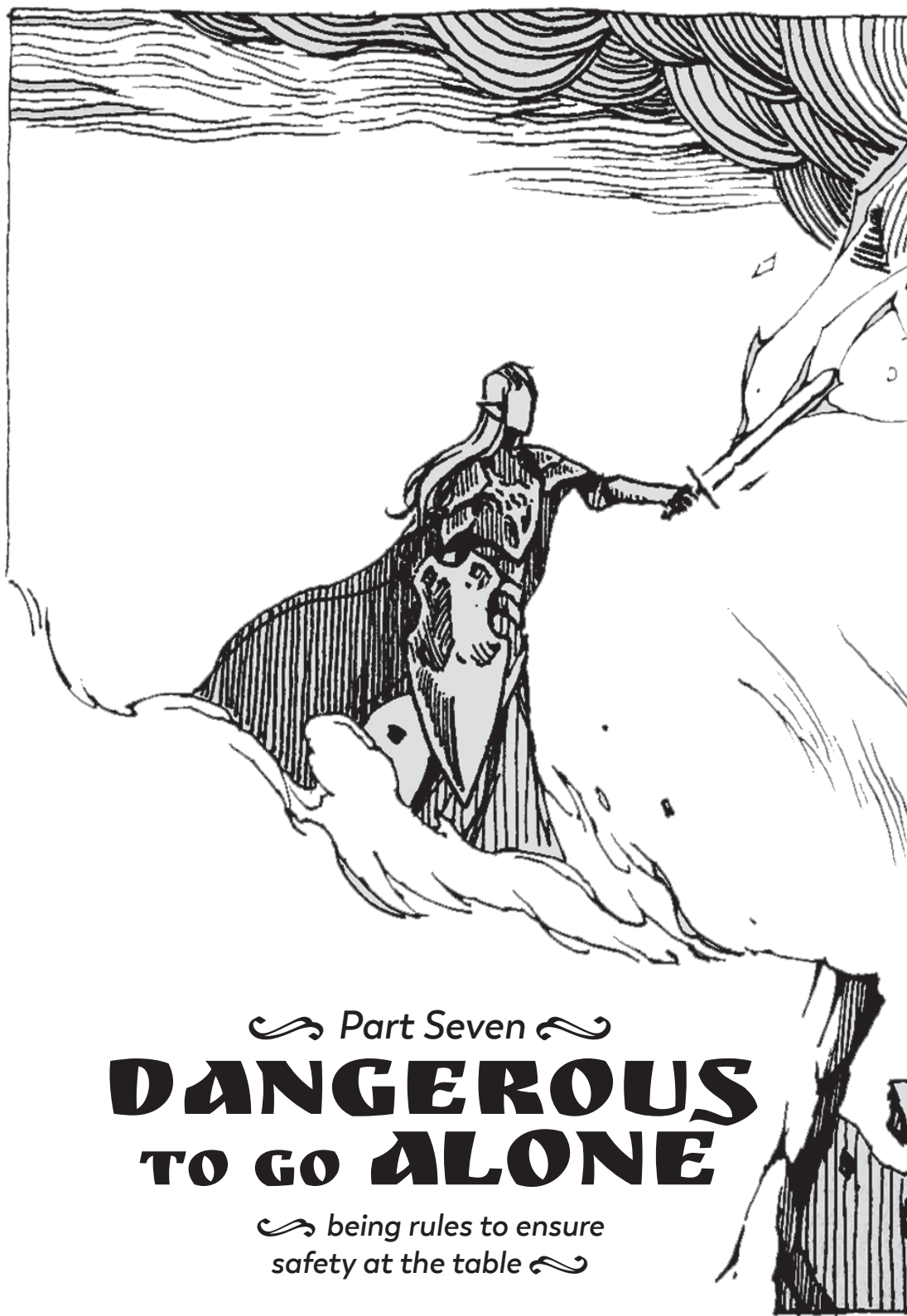


Add +1 to the Danger for multiple attacks.
Add +2 to the Danger for strange or deadly attacks.

SPECIALS, POWERS, AND MORE

Finally, reading through any creature write up you are going to discover **EDGES** that you as the Maze Controller can use against the party. Like any Edge, these don't need a lot of description – just an evocative name and short description.

*☿ **EXAMPLE:** Say, you are translating a Ghost that is intangible and has a draining touch – you may add the Edge “Insubstantial” and add +1 Danger for the draining touch. ☿*



❧ Part Seven ❧

DANGEROUS TO GO ALONE

❧ being rules to ensure
safety at the table ❧



ON SAFETY

“The second interloper knew the backways of Sanctuary and was hugging darkness back toward the Maze and safety.”

- Janet Morris, *Soul of the City*

9th Level Games truly wants everyone to be able to embrace and enjoy the tabletop experience. To do that, we need to be aware that the improvisational nature of roleplaying leaves open the possibility of crossing into areas that may be uncomfortable or even triggering for our friends (and doubly so when playing with people that we don't know well, or even at all). It's important for players to feel comfortable and safe when they are engaging with roleplaying games.

It is imperative when gaming with people that you don't know (or just don't know very well) to set boundaries and expectations before playing. Using an explanation of a Safety Mechanic is a good way to have this conversation in a no-worry, pressure free environment. Even when you are gaming with people that you know well, having a conversation about boundaries and a discussion of whether you should use specific safety mechanics is a good idea (especially if you have been playing with that group for a long time— things and people change).

OPEN DOOR POLICY

We strongly believe that all games should have an Open Door— anyone can leave the game for any reason at any time, and they will not be judged for doing so. If you need to go — do. It could be for an emotional reason, a bio break, to take an important phone call, or just because you know that you need to leave the game. No one should ever be questioned, made fun of, or coerced to stay and play— even if that means there aren't enough players for that particular game to continue.

The important part of having an Open Door in your game is making sure that everyone understands that the goal is comfort and safety. Players should feel comfortable leaving if they need or want to. While not required, if you don't plan on returning, let someone that you trust know (so that they don't come looking for you). You are not required in any way to explain or defend your decision— take the door, stay safe.



ENTHUSIASTIC CONSENT

Ask permission if what you're about to say or do affects another player. An enthusiastic yes means yes, anything else means no! No means say something else, do something else.

TRANSPARENCY AND CONTENT WARNINGS

Transparency means being up front with your players about what to expect. You don't need to spoil your plots, but it's important for players to know what they are getting into. If your game is going to be a lighthearted romp through the neighborhood trick or treating, tell them. If it's going to be a serious exploration of body horror, make sure they know.

LINES AND VEILS

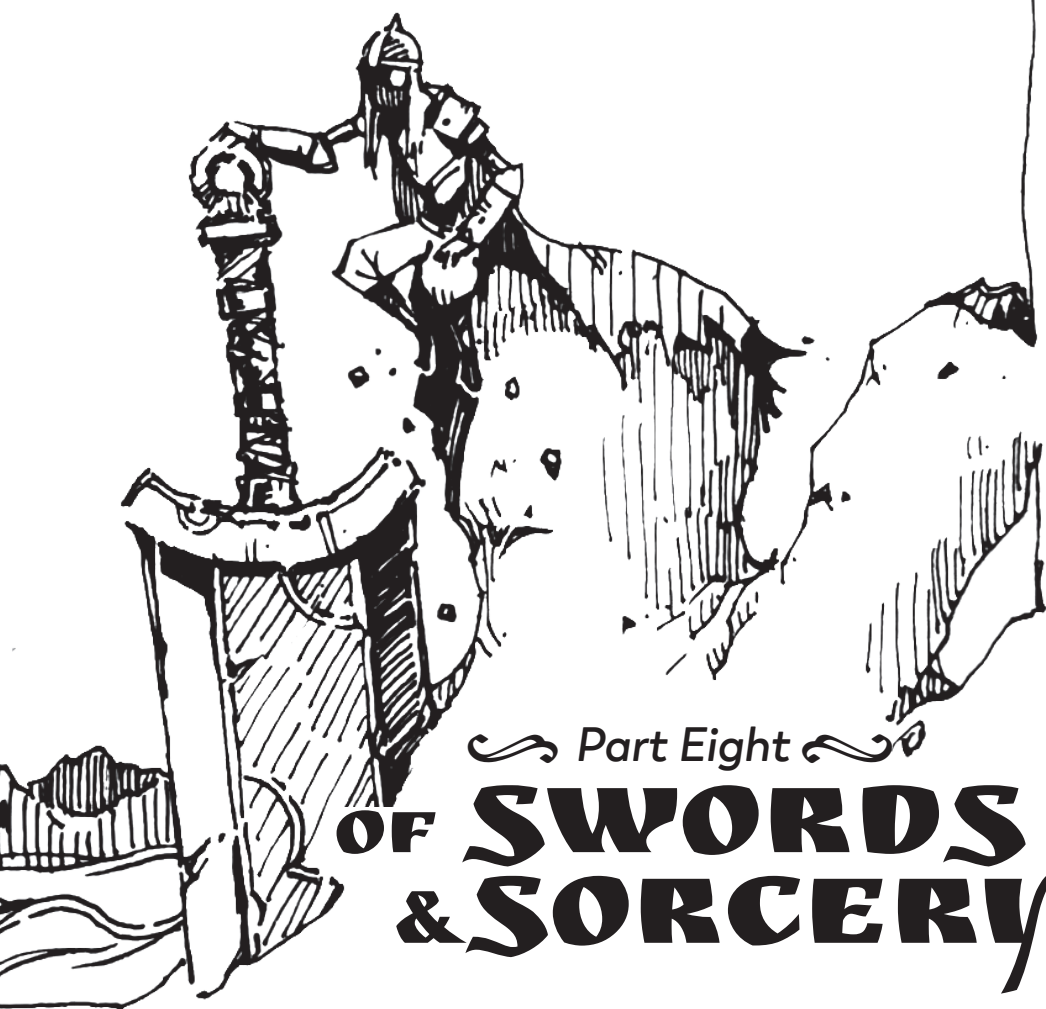
Lines and Veils is all about having a conversation! At the start of the game, establish what lines **you** don't want to cross and tell your players/your group what those lines are. Ask and allow space for everyone to establish and communicate their lines. When anyone establishes a line – everyone else needs to respect that line. There should be no discussion of it. It is not a topic for debate, it is a hard line that someone doesn't want to include in their roleplaying games.

A veil is similar to a line, but less cut and dried. What we are saying with a veil is that we acknowledge that something can/will occur in our game world, but that we would rather not directly roleplay that activity. We don't want a graphic description of the details – we are going to acknowledge the fact that it happened and move on. Again, ask for and allow space for everyone to establish and communicate their veils.

No discussion, no debate– respect everyone's lines and veils!







Part Eight

**OF SWORDS
& SORCERY**

~ SWORDS & SORCERY ~

“... an almost infinite labyrinth, balefully ingenious, from which egress was impossible: a maze that concealed in its winding. the most fateful and atrocious traps, the most unpredictable dooms...”

- Clark Ashton Smith, *Maze of the Enchanter*

When our forbearers were creating the games that we would call Fantasy Roleplay, they didn't know they were making Role Playing Games. What they did know they were making was Fantasy though.

The Dark Heart of Roleplay still beats to the drums of Fantasy. The form and the medium of fantasy storytelling is so wrapped up in the story of roleplaying that it is nearly impossible to pull them apart anymore. Stories led to games led to novels led to anime led to movies led to games. Ouroboros has been the menu and the meal since Dungeons and Dragons first hit the scene in 1974.

What is important to know is that the earliest players knew the form – just as the players of today do. In the 1970s, they knew about it because they read stories and comics of Sword and Sorcery. Today, it's because kids grew up playing Skyrim. The world turns, the snake god eats itself, and fantasy remains.

For Mazes, these are the roots and the branches. Read, watch, play, and welcome to the best the world of swords and sorcery has to offer.

THE WRITTEN WORD

Fritz Leiber's *Fafhrd and the Grey Mouser*

Clark Ashton Smith's *fantasies*

Michael Moorcock's *Eternal Champion*

Ursula K. Le Guin's *Earthsea*

Raymond E. Feist's *Midkemia*

Robert E. Howard's *Conan the Barbarian and more*

Jack Vance's *The Dying Earth*

L. Sprague de Camp's *The Goblin Tower*

Leigh Brackett's *Sword of Rhiannon*
Andre Norton's *Witchworld*
Roger Zelazny's *Chronicles of Amber*
Frank Herbert's *Dune*
Robert Heinlein's *Glory Road*
Poul Anderson's *The Broken Sword*
Gardner Fox's *Kothar*
Charles Saunders' *Imaro*
Janet E. Morris' *Silistra*
Lin Carter's *Thongor of Valkath*
Robert Asprin's *Thieves World anthologies*
Glen Cook's *Black Company*
Steven King's *The Dark Tower*
Gene Wolf's *Book of the New Sun*
J.R.R. Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings*
John Eric Holmes' *The Maze of Peril*
Geroge R.R. Martin's *A Song of Ice and Fire*
Joel Rosenberg's *Guardians of the Flame*
Fred Saberhagen's *Book of Swords*
Rose Estes' *Dungeon of Dread & Endless Quest*
Lyndon Hardy's *Master of the Five Magics*
Scott Lynch's *Lies of Locke Lamora*
Diana Wynne Jones's *Howl's Moving Castle*
Margaret Weis and Tracy Hickman's *Dragonlance*
Samantha Shannons' *The Priory of the Orange Tree*
Anne Leckie's *Raven Tower*
Terry Pratchett's *Discworld (especially the early ones)*

THE COMIC PAGE

Mike Grell's *Warlord*

Roy Thomas' *Red Sonja*

Walter Simonsen's *The Mighty Thor*

Dan Mishkin's *Amethyst Princess of Gemworld*

Kieron Gillen's *Die*

Noelle Stevenson's *Nimona*

THE SILVER SCREEN

George Lucas' *A New Hope*

Jim Wynorski's *Deathstalker II*

Terry Marcel's *Hawk the Slayer*

John Milius' *Conan*

Richard Donner's *Ladyhawke*

Don Coscarelli's *The Beastmaster*

Ron Howard's *Willow*

Matthew Robbins' *Dragonslayer*

OF BITS AND BYTES

Winston Douglas Wood's *Phantasie*

Jon Freeman's *Temple of Apshai*

Ed Logg's *Gauntlet*

Michael Cranford's *The Bard's Tale*

Richard Garriott's *Ultima 4*

James Ohlen's *Baldur's Gate*

Bruce Nesmith's *Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim*

OF DICE AND DRAGONS

Frank Metzger's BECMI *Dungeons & Dragons*

Gygax and Arneson's *original Dungeons & Dragons*

Milton Bradley's *Dark Tower*

David Hargrave's *Arduin Grimoire*

Kevin Siembieda's *Palladium Fantasy*

Bard Games' *The Arcanum*

N. Robin Crossby's *Harnworld*

David Black's *The Black Hack*

THE ANIMATED WORLD

Ryo Mizuno's *Record of Lodoss War*

Gary Gygax's *Dungeons & Dragons Cartoon*

Hannah Barbara's *Thundarr the Barbarian*

David Kirschner's *Pirates of Dark Water*

Reki Kawahara's *Sword Art Online*

Noelle Stevenson's *She-Ra and the Princesses of Power*

Pendelton Ward's *Adventure Time*

Ehasz and Richmond's *The Dragon Prince*

Ralph Bashki's films *Fire and Ice*, and *Wizards*

DiMartino and Konietzko's *The Last Airbender*

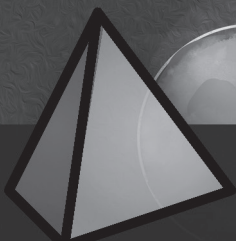
Rankin and Bass's *The Flight of Dragons*.

The Last Unicorn, *Return of the King*

Walt Disney's *The Sword and the Stone*, *Frozen*,

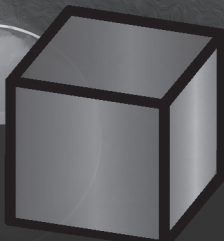
Frozen 2, *Raya and the Last Dragon*, *Mulan*, *The Black*

Cauldron, *Enchanted*, *Tangled*, *Brave*, and *Onward*



PARAGON

4♥ 4★



VANGUARD

6♥ 3★



FIGHTER

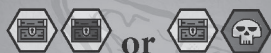
8♥ 2★



SENTINEL

10♥ 1★

EXPEDITION



per Treasure.

DARKNESS

TREASURE

HAZARD ENCOUNTERS

ENTERING THE DARKNESS

SPLITTING THE PARTY

IGNORING DANGERS

TIME PASSES

FLASHBACKS



BRIGHT

1 2 3

**SUCCEED
ON CROWN.**

*Advantage at
DEATH'S DOOR.*

**TREASURE
AFFECTS PARTY.**

TORCHLIT

4 5 6

**NEGOTIATE
ON CROWN.**

**TREASURE
AFFECTS PARTY.**

BLEAK

7+

**FAIL ON
CROWN.**

*Disadvantage at
DEATH'S DOOR.*

**TREASURE
AFFECTS SELF.**



MAZES

TREASURE

	LOOT	WEALTH
1	MAGIC ITEM	?
2	STRANGE LOOT*	
3	ELECTRUM COINS	
4	GEMSTONES	 
5	ANCIENT COINS	 
6	PRECIOUS OBJECT	
7	WORTHLESS JUNK	-
8	GOLD OBJECT	 
9	SILVER COINS	
10	GOLD COINS	 



May instead take LORE.

*Trade to an NPC for the FRIEND EDGE.

LIFESTYLE

Pay  to raise a tier.

Pay  or fall a tier:

Gold - Per Session

Silver - Per Season

Copper - Per Year

Broke - Take Stressed or Tired at session start.

SKINT

WHEN TREASURE
GOES BELOW THE
PARTY SIZE, ADD



ENCUMBERED

WHEN TREASURE
DOUBLES THE
PARTY SIZE, ADD



1



2



3



4



5



6



7



8



9

CONDITIONS

Disadvantage on
BOOKS.
No KEY Bonus.

Disadvantage on
BOOTS
and BONES.

Disadvantage on
BLADES.

Disadvantage at
DEATH'S
DOOR.

STRESSED

TIRED

HURT

MARKED

Blind, Charmed, Deaf, Frightened, Held, Invisible,
Lost, Petrified, Poisoned, Prone, On Fire, Veteran

HEALING

GASP! Knock on Death's Door.

WOUNDED!

Take Wounded. Clear Down.

Fill your ♥ and ☆.

STAND!

Clear Down. Fill your ♥ and ☆.

DEATH'S DOOR

DIE!

Death takes you!

SHOOK!

Take MARKED. On your next turn,
roll for HEALING.

STAND!

Take Marked. Clear Down.

Fill your ♥ and ☆.

RESOLVER

KEY

1

BOOKS

2 3

BOOTS

3 4 5

BLADES

4 5 6 7

BONES

5 6 7 8 9

CROWN

4 6 8 10

CHAOS
2 4 6 8 10

ADVANTAGE

Succeed if **EITHER** roll succeeds.
Hit on **BOTH** rolls, it's a **CRITICAL**.

DISADVANTAGE

Succeed only if **BOTH** rolls succeed.
Fail on **BOTH** rolls, it's a **FUMBLE**.

MAZES

1
KEY



23
BOOKS



3 4 5
BOOTS



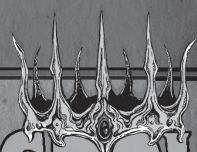
4 5 6 7
BLADES



5 6 7 8 9
BONES



4
CROWN



NAME

ASPECT

THE PARAGON
CLASS



EDGES

WEALTH



STRESSED

Disadvantage
on BOOKS.
NO KEY Bonus.

TIRED

Disadvantage
on BOOTS
and BONES.

HURT

Disadvantage
on BLADES.

MARKED

Disadvantage
at DEATH'S DOOR.

CONDITIONS

4

4

MAZES

NAME

THE VANGUARD CLASS

ASPECT

CLASS

EDGES

WEALTH



STRESSED

Disadvantage on BOOKS.
NO KEY Bonus.

TIED

Disadvantage on BOOTS and BONES.

HURT

Disadvantage on BLADES.

MARKED

Disadvantage at DEATH'S DOOR.

CONDITIONS

1 KEY



23 BOOKS



3 4 5 BOOTS



4 5 6 7 BLADES



5 6 7 8 9 BONES



6 CROWN



MAZES

1
KEY



23
BOOKS



3 4 5
BOOTS



4 5 6 7
BLADES



5 6 7 8 9
BONES



8
CROWN



NAME



ASPECT

CLASS

EDGES

WEALTH



CONDITIONS

STRESSED

Disadvantage on BOOKS.
NO KEY Bonus.

TIRED

Disadvantage on BOOTS
and BONES.

HURT

Disadvantage on BLADES.

MARKED

Disadvantage at DEATH'S DOOR.

8

2

MAZES

NAME



THE SENTINEL CLASS

ASPECT

CLASS

EDGES

WEALTH



STRESSED

Disadvantage on BOOKS.
NO KEY Bonus.

TIED

Disadvantage on BOOTS and BONES.

HURT

Disadvantage on BLADES.

MARKED

Disadvantage at DEATH'S DOOR.

10

1

1 KEY



23 BOOKS



3 4 5 BOOTS



4 5 6 7 BLADES



5 6 7 8 9 BONES



10 CROWN





9th Level Games
1980